A Short History of Islam

MAZHAR-UL-HAQ

A SHORT HISTORY OF ISLAM

FROM THE RISE OF ISLAM TO THE FALL OF BAGHDAD
(571 A.D. to 1258 A.D.)

by

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PREFACE

The study of the history of Islam is a popular and interesting theme. But it is often undertaken in an uncritical manner and with too much idealisation. We have presented it as a phenomenon of development and transformation of Islamic society and culture from tribalistic to feudal forms and ways of life.

The forces of transformation were the tribal energy, inspired by the teachings of prestine Islam and led by its political structure, the caliphal system, that is, a group of leaders and followers who were at once a religious community and a politico-military elite. But the caliphal system changed when it became an instrument of big feudal elites under the Umayyads and their successors, the Abbasides.

With this transformation, further development of Islamic society and culture was arrested, because Medieval Islam could not break through the primary kinship relations of clans, tribes, castes and local brotherhoods. These basic ways of social and cultural life, the tribes and clans in the arid and semi-arid regions of the Caliphate and the caste-like *isnaf* and other kinship groups in towns and villages became hotbeds of social and political decay and disintegration. They divided Islamic peoples and societies into small and exclusive groups, which were incapable of uniting into greater and stronger communities against their internal and external enemies. The kinship ways of life, with polygany, Purdah, concubinage, and slavery as their necessary social customs and relations, became the forces of degeneration, decline and downfall of the Islamic kingdoms and empires before the onslaught of their internal enemies and foreign invaders. This process of internal decay and fall of Islamic kingdoms and empires became a regularly recurrent phenomena throughout the medieval history of Islam.

These are the sociological and anthropological tools and techniques of social analysis with which we have presented the story of Islam as it actually happened in the Middle Ages.

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CHAPTER 1

ARABIA BEFORE ISLAM

THE LAND OF ARABIA

Knowledge of the historical and geographical background of ancient Arabia is useful in understanding the History of Islam. It is with this view that we shall begin with the geography of the land of Arabia, and its early history.

Arabia is a vast peninsula in the south-west corner of Asia. It is one of the biggest peninsulas on the world-map, having a maximum length of 1,500 miles, a breadth of 1,300 miles and a total area of over 12,00,000 square miles. It is one of the hottest and driest lands, an arid and forbidding land, one-third of which is a stony desert. Arabia has three deserts; *viz.*, **Nifud** in the north, which forms part of the Desert of Syria, the **Dahna**, which stretches across Central Arabia, and extends to the third desert, called the **Rab'al Khali**, the Empty Quarter, which is the largest desert in this land of the deserts. As its name shows, the Rab'al Khali is devoid of all living things, plants, animals and men. On the whole, Arabia is an inclined plateau whose western side is higher than eastern. A mountain range stretches from Aden in the south to the Sinai desert in the north along the Red Sea coast. Geographically, Arabia is divided into certain well-marked regions. They are: Hijaz in the north-west, with the stony desert of Najd to the east of Hijaz. Next come the Central Arabian regions of Yemama in the heart of Arabia, Asir on the coast of the Red Sea, and Tihama, the coastal lowland of the Red Sea. Yemen is the south-western part of Arabia. It is its most fertile and healthy region, with enough rainfall and a mild climate. It had been the seat of the most ancient civilisation in Arabian history. To the east of Yemen is the province of Hadramawt on the coast of the Indian Ocean. In the southeastern corner of the Arabian peninsula lies Uman. To the north of Uman lies Bahrain or al-Hasa along the coast of the Persian Gulf.

Fauna and flora. Arabia is the driest and the most rainless country in the world. It is the only big country which has no river or an yearly stream worth the name. Except in the coastal regions of Yemen, Uman, etc., there is little rainfall. But whenever it rains, it falls in torrents. Hence vegetation is very little. Not only water is meagre, but the little that is there is saline and bitter. The result is that few bushes and stunted trees grow, whose leaves are

so saline that on them only such animals as camels or goats can thrive. Horse is a rare animal and the cow is rarer still. Among the wild animals, the reptiles predominate. The birds are mostly migratory, such as the bastard. The locust is a native of Arabia, where it breeds and then spreads to the neighbourıng countries at regular intervals.

Arabia on the world-map. The Arabs call their country '*Jazirat al-Arab*', the 'Island of Arabia'. It is indeed an island, surrounded by water on three sides and by the sand on the fourth. In its west lies the Red Sea, in the south is the Indian Ocean, in the east the Persian Gulf, and in the north is the desert of Nefud or the Syrian Desert, which is an equally impassable barrier, particularlly in the ancient and medieval times. Owing to these barriers of water and sand, Arabia remained more or less isolated from the rest of the world, although it was sandwiched between the two oldest civilisations of the world, namely, those of Egypt and ancient Iraq. To its north flourished the Greco-Roman civilisation in Syria and Palestine. But its isolation was never absolute. The result was that both men and ideas, and other influences had always penetrated into ancient Arabia. But these influences were so slow and few that the Arabs never lost their native characteristics and identity. As Arabia is surrounded by fertile countries of Iraq, Syria and Egypt in its east, north and west,—'the fertile crescent', as the modern writers put it, the Arab people have always been attracted to these rich and fertile lands either by peaceful migration or by invasion and conquest. The most famous of these migrations and invasions were the conquests of early Islam, which we shall describe in subsequent chapters.

Races of Arabia. According to Arabian traditions, the Arabs are divided ino three races. They are, firstly, the Primitive Arabs, who were called the **Arab Baida**. To this race belonged such ancient Arab tribes as the Ad, the Samood (Thamud), the Jadıs, etc. All of them were destroyed by the later races of the Arabs. The second race of the Arabs is the **Banu Qahtan**, also called the *Himyarites*, or the Yemanis, because their homeland was the Yeman or South Arabia. They are known as the **Arab Ariba,** the real Arabs. It is with the rise of the Qahtan tribes in South Arabia that the history of Arabia properly begins. Lastly, there are the Northern Arabs, called the **Arab Musta'riba'** the naturalized Arabs. They are the descendants of Ishmael, the son of the Prophet Abraham and Hajira, one of his wives, who was left by him along with her child in Hijaz at the place which later came to be known as Mecca. Ishmael had a son, named Adnan, and two descendants, known as **Nizar** and **Modhar**. The Ishmaelite tribes are, therefore, also known after these ancestors as the Adnanites, Nizaris, and the *Modharites*. The tribe of the Holy Prophet, the Quraysh,

belonged to the Ishmaelite group of the Arab race. As a matter of fact, the history of Arabia and of Islam in early period is the history of the rivalry and disputes of these two branches of the Arab race, the Himyarite branch of South Arabia and the Modharite branch of North Arabia.

People of Arabia. From the socio-economic standpoint, the people of Arabia consisted of two kinds of tribes or people, namely, the dwellers of the desert called the *Bedouins* and the dwellers of the town, or the *Ahl-ul Hadharah*, the townspeople.

The Bedouins. A great majority of the Arab people, more than 80% of Arabia's population, were the dwellers of the desert, called the *Ahl-ul Badiya*, the people of the desert, (singular the *Bedawi*. plural *Bedwin*, which is anglicised as the Bedouins). They were divided into tribes. Each tribe (*qabilah*) consisted of several clans (*Banu* or *hayy*); and each clan consisted of several families, related together by descent from a common ancestor. The family, headed by the father, consisted of his wives, their children, dependents, slaves, etc. Arab society is patriarchal and all relations are traced through the father or the male members of the tribe. The heads of the families select the chief of the tribe, called the *Shaikh*. The selection is determined by such considerations as the seniority in age, nobility of birth and such qualities of head and character as courage, wisdom, sagacity, etc. There were also some matriarchal tribes in pre-Islamic Arabia.

As most of Arabia is a barren desert, the desert-dwellers are necessarily wanderers of the desert or nomadic tribes. The Bedouins have to move from place to place in search of water and pasture for their animals, the camels, the goats and sheep. Every Bedouin tribe thus travels nearly 500 miles every year. So a Bedouin spends his whole life roaming in the desert, and living in tents, which are pitched in a line by the clan; one tent for one family. The camel is the most essential animal for the Bedouin. He is the Arab's "ship of the desert", his means of transport and travel. He lives on the camel's milk, and occasionally on his flesh. He makes his garments and tents with his hair. His dung is his fuel. In times of intense scarcity the Bedouin even drinks water from the stomach of his camel, while the Bedouin men and women use the camel's urine to wash their hair; sometimes they use it even as a purgative. The Bedouin is therefore aptly described as 'a parasite of the camel'; he lives where his camel can live. History has shown that the Arabs conquered as far into Asia, Africa and Europe as their camels could go and live.

The Bedouins have little to live upon: the scanty pastures do not provide them much. They have, therefore, to move from one

pasture to another. Although their pastures are allotted by age-old customs, but when a Bedouin tribe finds none, it is ready to attack and plunder its more fortunate neighbours. So the mutual fighting, plundering and raiding were everyday affairs among the Bedouins, who were therefore born raiders and fighters.

Town-Arabs. Like the Bedouins, the town-dwellers were also divided into tribes and patriarchal families. However, they did not lead a pastoral and nomadic life, but a settled life, with a permanent settlement in a town or an oasis. The sedentary Arabs of the town or oasis carry on either trade or agriculture. As they are much richer, more cultured and civilised than the Bedouins, they have always provided the leaders of the Arab nation. In the history of Islam they had been the generals, commanders and rulers, while the Bedouins had been the rank and file soldiers and warriors.

History of the Arabs. Broadly speaking, we can divide the history of the Arabs into three periods:—

1. The ancient Arabian period, beginning from the earliest times down to about 450 A. D.

2. The Jahiliya Period, from about 450 A. D. to the rise of Islam.

3. The Islamic Period (570—1258 A. D.)

We shall here briefly describe the first two periods of the Arabian history, while the Islamic Period is the subject-matter of all subsequent chapters.

HISTORY OF ANCIENT ARABIA

Ancient Arabia. Though Arabia's neighbours, Egypt and Iraq, became civilised countries two or three thousand years before Christ, Arabia herself remained an unknown and dark country till the rise of the southern kingdoms of Ancient Arabia. Arabia was then inhabited by a negroid race, which was attacked, destroyed or driven into the Rab'al Khali, the vast desert in South Arabia. These invaders were the Banu Qahtan. They established their first kingdom of Ma'in in the Yemen, which flourished from about 1200 B. C. to 650 B. C. It was overthrown by the Sabaean kingdom of the Banu Qahtan, which passed through successive changes. The Qahtanite kingdom of Saba or South Arabia flourished from 950 B. C. to 115 A. D. Their kings were great builders and traders. They built many castles, palaces, and above all the dams, among which the most famous was the Dam of Ma'rib, known as the Sadd Ma'rib, in Yemen. These dams

irrigated vast lands in South Arabia on which flourished many towns and tribes of the Banu Qahtan.

Rise of the Himyarite Kingdom of Sana. In 115 A D., a branch of the Banu Qahtan, known as the Himyar, rose into prominence and power. The Himyarite kings were also great builders. Their power and prosperity were based on a kind of tribal mercantile feudalism. So famous South Arabia became for her riches and prosperity that the Greek and Roman geographers and writers called her "*Arabia Felix*" (the "happy Arabia"), as contrasted to the sandy Central Arabia which they called *Arabia Deserta* and the stony Nothern Arabia which they called *Arabia Petra* or the stony Arabia. Like the Qahtanites before them, the Himyarite kings built so many castles or forts that the Yeman came to be called the "land of the castles". The most famous of these castles was the castle of Ghumdan, which had twenty stories—the first skyscraper in human history. The castles were the manors of the Himyarite feudal chiefs, built on hills, around which were the irrigated lands cultivated by their tribesmen. The Himyarite chiefs also constructed wells, cisterns, and above all, the dams, which collected the rain-water to irrigate their fertile lands. The Marib Dam was the greatest among them, a remarkable engineering feat. It was destroyed by floods several times, but so long as the Qahtanite and Himyarite kingdoms remained strong, the Dam was successfully repaired. The ancient Arabs were also great traders, or to be more exact, they were international traders, as they carried on trade with South Asia and Persia in the east and the Roman provinces of Syria, Palestine and Egypt in the west.

The Decline of the Himyar Kingdom and the Beginning of the Jahiliya Period. The Himyar Kingdom flourished from 115 A. D. till the middle of the Fourth Century A. D., when it declined owing to several causes. The first threat to the prosperity and power of the Himyar kingdom came from the commercial rivalry of the Romans, who had established their rule in Egypt. Roman ships entered the Red Sea and thus outflanked the commercial monopoly of the Himyars.

The Breaking of the Ma'rib Dam. Simultaneously with the Roman threat, the Himyar Kingdom of Sana was confronted with a more serious danger from within. It was the breach of the Ma'rib dam. Although the medieval Arab historians, loving dramatic effect more than historical fact, believed that a rat brought about the destruction of this great Dam by removing a stone, it was, in fact, destroyed several times by the floods and then repaired. Each breach of the Dam made several of the calamity-stricken tribes of the Yemen to migrate to northern parts of Arabia and beyond. Though it is difficult to say exactly when

these series of the bursting of the Dam began, the first breach would have occurred in the Third Century A. D. and the next recorded breach occurred in about 450 A. D., while the last one took place in about 540 A. D., which the Arab historians have called 'the bursting of the great dam' by a great flood. This destroyed the great Dam for all time and buried it under the sands of the Arabian desert. The ruins of this Dam are visible even to-day. Every breach of the Dam set a series of chain-reactions of events and disturbances throughout ancient Arabia, because it made some of the calamity-stricken tribes of the Yemen to migrate to the northern parts of Arabia and beyond. The first of the Yemeni or Himyarite tribes to leave their southern homeland was Banu Ghassan. They settled in the desert of Syria. Next the Tanukh left and settled near Hira in the Persian empire. Then the Kindah and other tribes went to the Central and Northern Arabia. Lastly, the Azd and other tribes left for Uman and Bahrain. Among them were also the Aus and Khazraj tribes who settled in the Jewish colony of Yathrib or Medina. Every migration of the Yemeni tribes to the North led to wars with the earlier tribes, especially the Ishmaelite tribes of Banu Modhar. Thus every wave of the Southern tribes increased inter-tribal struggles and wars and thereby ushered in the Jahiliya Period of the ancient history of Arabia.

Fall of the Himyarite Kingdom. The imperial ambitions of the Christian empire of Byzantium ultimately destroyed the Himyarite Kingdom of Sana in about 525 A. D. During the Fifth Century A. D. both the Jewish and Christian religions spread into South Arabia. The last Himyar king, Dhu Nuwas, was a fanatical Jew. He persecuted the Christians, who appealed to the Byzantine Emperor Justin I for aid. The Emperor wrote to Negus, the king of Abyssinia, who sent a large army of 70,000 against Dhu Nuwas. He was defeated and killed in 525 A. D. Thus ended the independence of the Himyarite kingdom of Sana. It really fell victim to the international rivalry of the two Empires of antiquity, that is, the Empires of Persia and Byzantine. The Abyssinian rule lasted for nearly 50 years. In about 570 A. D. the Abyssinian chief named Abrahah attacked Mecca in order to destroy its increasing importance as a national temple of the Arabs. But his army was decimated by small-pox and he failed in his objective. As his army had an elephant,—an animal the terror-stricken Arabs had never seen,—they called the year of Abrahah's invasion as the 'Year of Elephant'—"*am al-fil*". Few years after, the Yemeni Arabs overthrew the hated Christian rule of the Abyssinians with the aid of the rival imperialism of Persia. But they soon found that they had merely exchanged one imperial master for another. In the meanwhile mighty events had taken place in Hijaz in North Arabia. The national spirit of the Southern Arabs made them seek the aid

of their northern Arab brethren against the imperialism of the Persian Chosroes. Thus the Arabia of Islam was born in the throes of the imperialist intrigues of Rome and Persia.

THE JAHILIYA PERIOD (Circa 450 A. D.—570 A. D.)

The Jahiliya Period. The period of two centuries before the rises of Islam is known as the 'Jahiliya Period' or the Age of ignorance in the history of ancient Arabia. It was an age of crisis, when the old tribalism broke down under the impact of powerful forces, both internal and external, which operated in Arabia during Fifth and Sixth centuries A. D. They were, firstly, the disintegration of the ancient matriarchal system, secondly, the growth of money-economy throughout Arabia, thirdly the migration of the Yemani tribes to Northern Arabia which intensified inter-tribal wars of the Arab tribes, and lastly, the increase in imperialist intrigues of Rome and Persia among the border tribes of North Arabia as well as among the Sourthern Arabs. These factors were responsible for the break-down of the ancient Arabian society and for letting loose a crisis, which was resolved only by the rise of Islam.

Conditions of the Arabs during the Jahiliya Period

Socio-Economic Crisis. Ancient Arabia was essentially a tribal society, in which a great majority was of nomadic, pastoral tribes, the Bedouins. The Bedouin tribes lived a semi-communistic life, holding such sources of livelihood in common as pastures, water-springs, cultivable land, etc Only personal belongings, like the tent, household articles, were owned privately. An Arab had no personal gain or individual interest ; he lived for his tribe or clan. There were few towns ; but even the town Arabs lived the same communistic tribal life as the Arabs of the desert. But gradually however, new kind of tribes arose in the towns, first in South Arabia of the Himayarite kings and then in Northern Arabia. They were the money-conscious and aristocratic tribes. They were a product of the internal trade and international commerce which had started in the dim days of the Minaean and Sabaean kingdoms of antiquity, but flourished during the Himyarite kingdom. During the Jahiliya period, the centre of Arabian commerce shifted to Hijaz, due to the imperialistic rivalry and depradations of Rome and Persian in the Yeman. The Quraysh became the leading mercantile tribe of this Age. They had, however, several commercial allies and rivals, such as the Thaqifs of Taif. The Jewish agrarian money-lenders and the Christian wine-merchants also joined them. Headed by the Quraysh, these mercantile tribes organised the whole Arabian society for commerce and economic

gain. Fairs were held all over Arabia. Markets were opened in various towns. Caravans of trade were sent into all directions of Arabia and beyond. Trade routes were laid out into all parts of Arabia from south to north, from east to west, with Mecca becoming more and more the centre and emporium of national and international trade of Arabia. The Bedouin tribes were induced by means of fairs and pilgrimage to visit these fairs and holy places. They brought with them their surplus produce, such as the incense, gums, dates, etc., and bought in exchange grain, oil, textiles, swords and weapons. Often the Bedouin tribes became the debtors of the rich merchants of the town. Thus to them the Quraysh come to mean 'shark', which eats the lesser fish. In this way these desert tribes were entangled into the coils of the money-economy of the Quraysh and other merchant tribes. In their turn, these merchant tribes carried the Bedouin produce and the Indian goods purchased in the Yemen to the market-towns of Syria. There they exchanged them mostly with the Roman gold and silver, because the Byzantines had little else to exchange for Arybian merchandise. Thus, as time passed, the Quraysh and their commercial allies accumulated more and more wealth in the form of gold, silver and other precious things. The money-economy, however, acted as a solvent of the earlier communal and matriarchal tribalism. It disrupted its tribal customs and social relations, undermined its moral principles and values, intensified the greed and hunger of both the Bedouin and town-Arabs and led to very bitter and protracted wars among the tribes. This socio-economic crisis was further deepened by the migration of the Yemeni tribes to the North and the imperialistic intrigues and designs of Rome and Persia. These causes made the life of the Jahiliya Arabs more and more nasty, brutish and miserable.

Political Life. The Wars of the Ayyam-al Arab. We shall ow deal with their political life.

Arabia of the Jahiliya Period is characterised by a mixture of the opposites; at one and the same time something sublime or noble was found along with the ugly and inhuman. This was true of their political life. Love of freedom and liberty was vitiated by utter anarchy and chaos. Arabia was never united into a single state or kingdom during the ancient and Jahiliyah periods. The kingdoms of Saba or Sana in the south and of Hira and Banu Ghassan in the north were confined to small parts of the vast peninsula. But even these petty kingdoms were enslaved or destroyed by their powerful neighbours of Byzantium and Persia. Thus Arabia of the Jahiliyah period was without any central government or single political authority. The whole country was divided into innumerable tribes. Each tribe was headed by a Shaikh, chosen by the heads of the families for his qualities of courage, sagacity

and leadership on the battlefied or in the tribal counsels. Each tribe was a sort of a petty state. Every one of its members was bound by its customs and tribal decisions. The tribal Shaikh was not an absolute master ; he had to consult all the tribesmen, especially the elders of the tribe. He was obeyed only when he led the tribe successfully on the battlefield. He decided tribal affairs with the consent of the whole tribe. The lowest tribesman was on equal footing with the Shaikh in matters of tribal affairs and decisions. This was the democratic spirit of equality and freedom, especially among the Bedouin tribes of the desert. The tribal chief was bound to lead his tribe in the battle and to preserve its interests and rights against all others. If a man killed someone within his tribe, no one defended him against the revenge of the murdered person's relatives, who could either kill him or take blood-money or pardon him. If he ran away from tribal justice, he became an outcast, and, therefore, outside the pale of his tribe's protection. If a man killed a man of the other tribe, his tribe avenged his blood by raiding the murderer's tribe. This was the tribal security system, and one of the causes of inter-tribal wars. The tribal spirit or unity,—*asabiyha*, and the fear of inviting retaliation from the other tribes were the restraining forces which prevented unpremeditated disputes and injury on the men and property of the neighbouring tribes. But even then wars were too frequent among them.

Ayyam al Arab : or the Wars of the "Days of the Arabs". Owing to the socio-economic causes which we have traced above, the economic poverty, the barrenness and scarcity of Arabia, the migration of the southern tribes, the growing money—economy and greed, the tribal wars assumed fierce proportions during the Jahiliyah period. There was no central authority to restrain them. The tribal pride and greed prompted them to frequent disputes, which assumed the form of long-drawn tribal wars. The Arab poets called them the "Ayyam al Arab', the "Days of the Arabs." The causes of these wars were usually a petty affair, such as a dispute over the boundaries of a pasture, a claim over spring-water, or an injury to the person or animal of a tribe by another. Once started, the war would last for several years and even decades. Often the cause was the plundering instinct of a tribe which raided a weak neighbour. But the weak tribe sought the aid and alliance of a strong one and the two confederates joined together against the aggressor. Thus many tribes combined into warring confederacies or alliances to fight long wars over vast areas and for many years. These protracted inter-tribal wars became particularly acute at the end of the Jahiliyah period, that is, just before the emergence of Islam.

A single Arab could not live alone. That is why to become

an outcast or a tribeless Arab was really a death-sentence for the unfortunate person. He would be killed the moment he stepped out of the pale of his tribe. He must seek the protection of some other tribe and become its 'maula' or client, that is, a sort of freed slave. The tribe or the clan was the political unit ; but even then it was not a stable and permanent unit. Whenever a tribe reached a fairly large size, it split up into two or more new tribes or clans which were as ready to fight among themselves as with other tribes. As a matter of fact, one of the factors which led to the rise of Islam among the Quraysh was this fissiparous tendency, that is, the the mutual rivalry and inter-clan quarrels of the Quraysh tribe, which had multiplied to large numbers by the time of the Holy Prophet. Thus Arabia of the Jahiliyah period presents a strange spectacle of tribes fighting with the tribes, clans with other clans and each ready to quarrel within itself. Though united by blood or interest, they were also "ever ready" as Sir William Muir puts it, "on some insignificat cause to separate and abandon themselves to an implicable hostility". So the Arab was a wild man ; his hand raised against every other man and every other man's against him.

We shall mention here only a few examples of the Jahiliyah wars. One of these wars called the "War of Basus", originated from a quarrel over a she-camel owned by an old woman named Basus. Her camel was wounded by a chief of the Taghlib tribe, for which she taunted her tribe, Banu Bakr, to a war with Taghlib tribe. It lasted for 40 years. Tribal pride, Arab's instinctive spirit of hostility and plunder, and the fiery words and verses of the Arab poets were really the reasons why it lasted so long. Many other tribes joined the two warring tribes. It ended in about 525 A.D. when both sides had exhausted themselves by nearly two generations of mutual raiding, plundering and killing. It may be remarked that the two tribes, Taghlib and Banu Bakr, descended from a common ancestor Wai'l. Soon after the close of the Basus War, another equally prolonged war, the War of Dahis and al-Ghabra' (the names of a horse and a mare respectively) broke out between the two sister-tribes of the Abs and the Dhubyan of Central Arabia. The quarrel rose over a horse-race, and the war lasted till the rise of Islam. All the other tribes living in Central Arabia and Najd joined it.

Such is the picture of Arabia before Islam, a picture of political anarchy and disunity, wars and chaos, plunder and murder. That was the reason why the neighbouring countries, Persia and the Eastern Roman Empire, regarded the Arabs as mere robbers and had no fear of them ; "a more disunited people it would be hard to find, till suddenly, the miracle took place. A man arose who, by his personality and his claim to direct Divine guidance, actually brought about the impossible—namely the union of all these warring factions." He was Muhammad (Sm).

Social and moral life. As the greater part of Arabia was barren desert or arid rocks, agriculture was not Arabs' chief occupation. The Bedoin tribes were pastoral and nomadic, while the townspeople were mainly traders and merchants. The society was tribal and matriarchal or patriarchal. They had also a few slaves, who were the prisoners of war, captured on the battlefield. The male slaves were put to work, such as tending the cattle, etc., while the female slaves were made domestic servants and concubines. When freed, a slave became the mawla or client of the family to which he belonged. In this way, also, a weak tribe, clan or family became the 'mawla' or client of its powerful neighbour.

Position of the Women. The position of Women presents the same duality as other aspects of Arab life during the Jahiliyah period. Some of the women, especially among the matriarchal tribes, enjoyed a position of respect and influence. The Bedouin women also enjoyed greater freedom than their urban sisters. But as the life and society of the Jahiliyah period degenerated, the position of the women deteriorated. The pre-Islamic Arabs treated their women as worse than animals. They were regarded as chattels, to be passed on from one owner to another. The women had no rights and no social status. Men were of course polygamous. If a man could afford, he married as many women as he liked, and could divorce them at will. Muta' or temporary marriages were too frequent. On the death of a man, his sons married their step-mothers, or his brothers inherited his widows as though they were chattels. Among some tribes, especially among the richer and aristocratic Quraysh and the like, the cruel custom of female infanticide was also prevalent, partly due to a perverted sense of honour and partly due to Arabia's perpetual hunger. It was a sort of practical Malthusianism, a check on population growth. A Jahiliyah poet laments the birth of a daughter and desires her death—not because he does not love his little girl but because :—

"I dread that some day poverty will overtake my child.
And shame befall her when exposed to every passion wild.
She wishes me to live, but I must wish her dead, woe's me;
Death is the noblest wooer a helpless maid can see,
I fear an uncle may be harsh, a brother be unkind,
When I would never speak a word that rankled in her mind.

Even in normal times Arabia is a hard country for the weaker sections of the society, such as the women, the slaves, the poor. But during a social crisis like that of the Jahiliyah period their lot was harder still. No wonder that the women of the Jahiliyah period suffered terribly. They had no property, no rights, no social respect nor honour. Polygamy and even polyandry were rampant. Islam brought about a tremendous amelioration in their status,

as we shall see in subsequent chapters.

The Jahiliyah crisis produced and intensified many other social vices, such as wine-drinking, prostitution, gambling, etc. Wine-drinking made the rash temperament of the Arabs still more reckless. So the Jahiliyah poets sang : "Never they cease from carousing save to cry, Fill up again" : Gambling was a common pastime and those who refused to indulge in it were looked upon as miserly. It is a proof of the moral degeneration of the Jahiliyah Arabs that though they were ready to kill their little daughters for the fear of poverty, yet they had no scruples to waste their wealth in gambling and wine-drinking. With the increasing wealth of the mercantile tribes of the towns, like that of Mecca, Taif, etc., prostitution also prevailed there. Bond women were forced by their masters to make money for them in this mean manner.

Cultural Life. The self-contradictory nature of the Jahiliyah period is revealed in its cultural activity also. The Arabs of this period knew little or nothing about arts, culture and learning, except of Arabic language and poetry. It is a fascinating mystery of Arab history of how Arabic poetry and language, like Minerva, sprang up fully-developed and perfect out of the dim past of ancient Arabia. As Prof. Hitti writes, "Arabic literature, like most literatures, sprang into existence with an outburst of poetry ; but, unlike many other, its poetry seems to have issued forth full grown".

Intellectual forces and ferment in Ancient Arabia. Though it may not be easy to trace the development of Arabic language and poetry from stage to stage, we can, at least, point, out the factors and forces which brought about their sudden transformation and perfection. They lay in the very conditions of life of the Arabs during the ancient and Jahiliya periods, that is, the nomadic conditions of those ages. Both the tent-dwellers and the town-dwellers of ancient Arabia were constantly on the march,—the nomads in search of water and pastures, and the merchant tribes for trade and profit. This constant motion produced a fair degree of uniformity of the spoken Arabic among the Arab tribes from one end of the country to another, although at first the language of the Southern tribes of the Qahtan race was different from that of the Nothern Ishmaelite tribes. This process was aided even by the Arab's instinct for raiding and plundering his neighbour, in which the Jahiliyah Arabs indulged so much. Tribal pride as well as the need for success in war and raid made the Arab tribes to patronise their poets, orators and the like. An Arab is a born storyteller. He loves to tell a good story as much as to hear one. He has also a wonderful memory. That is why the 'rawis' or reciters of poems, odes and other kinds of poetry flourished among the

Jahiliyah Arabs and even in later times. This is also the reason why the long 'qasidahs' or odes of the poets of that period, but no prose, have survived to the present days, although the Arabs of those days did not know the art of writing. By the word 'kitab' or book, they meant not something written but something memorised. Other factors of intellectual ferment were such people as the soothsayers, *i.e.* the 'kahins', etc. Anothers powerful intellectual influence was provided by the 'fairs' which were held in different parts of ancient Arabia. The tribes assembled there not only for exchange of their goods but also for competition in poetry and oratory. Among them the Ukaz fair, near Mecca, was the most famous. If Meccan Ka'ba was the national temple of pagan Arabia, Ukaz was her national academy. It was here that a national congress of Arab poets was held during the months when war among the tribes was forbidden, before the pilgrimage to Ka'ba. The judges awarded prize to the best poem, which was then, as legend has it, written in gold letters and hanged at the door of the Ka'ba. Hence these famous poems or odes came to be called the "Mu'allaqat". Another cause of the development of the ancient Arabic was the love of the Arabs for an eloquent language. The ancient Arab loved three things intensely, his language, his camel and his clan. Ancient Greeks manifested their national genius in sculpture and architecture, the ancient Hindus in their mythology, while the ancient Arabs manifested it in their language. "The beauty of a man" says an ancient Arabic proverb "lies in the eloquence of his tongue." "Eloquence, *i.e.*, ability to express one's self forcefully and elegantly in both prose and poetry," writes Prof. Hitti, "together with archery and horsemanship were considered in the Jahiliyah period the three basic attributes of 'the perfect man' (al-kamil)". This was the reason why every individual Arabdevoted himself to the perfection of his language, and made it a perfect instrument of speech or thought-communication. The perfection of the Arabic language was the greatest contribution of the Jahiliyah period to the emergence of Islam. Prof. Hitti has rightly remarked: "The triumph of Islam was to a certain extent the triumph of a language, more particularly of a book."

Pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. Another cultural achievement of pagan Arabia was its poetry,—its only artistic or literary achievement. Its evolution and perfection was due mainly to the three factors of the Arabian life of the Jahiliya period *viz.*, Arab's love for an eloquent language, as we have mentioned above, his camel and the endless tribal wars of the "Ayyam al Arab". The Arab's camel played his role in this poetical evolution partly by the peculiar rhythmic movements of his peripatertics, which suggested the song of the camel-rider called '*huda*' ; but mainly due to the utter dependence of the Arabs on their camels both in war and in peace. This made the Arab poets devote verses after verses to the beauties

or qualities of their camels. As regards the wars of the Ayyam al-Arab, poetry as well as oratory, but poetry more than oratory, were the powerful weapons of the psychological warfare whose importance the Arabs of the Jahiliyah period understood so well. The poets and to a lesser extent, the *Khatibs* or orators of an Arab tribe, stood in the front rank on the battlefield and fought not so much with their swords as with their tongues. They inspired their fellow tribesmen and allies to fight courageously, while pouring endless abuses and invectives on their enemies, and their name. There was much in common between the Jahiliyah period of ancient Arabia and the present-day period of the world history. Like the modern wars, the wars of the Jahiliyah period were total wars. They were fought with every kind of weapons whether made of metals or of the words of mouth, and were fought by the whole tribes. Furthermore, the wars of the Jahiliyah period were like cold wars of today; they were long and protracted struggles. When a Jahiliyah war ended, peace did not ensue in the troubled land. On the other hand, the end of one war ushered in a period of fierce and thorough preparations for the next. This made the poets and the 'khatibs' as indispensable in times of uneasy peace as on the field of battle. In such times they sang of the glorious deeds of thier tribes, praised their past achievements, traced their genealogical 'tree' right upto Adam himself, or at least upto Ishmael and Abraham, and moulded public opinion in favour of their patrons—the tribal chiefs or rulers. The words they uttered one day were on the lips of the people the next and were carried from one corner of the country to the other with the speed of a fire in a forest. The Arabs of the Jahiliyah period were in their own way a dynamic people, full of great energy and initiative. A poet of this period was a composite personality. He was, at one and the same time, an oracle, a guide, an orator, a journalistst, a press agent, a publicity man, a historian, a scientist, a moulder of public opinion and a spokesman of his tribe. It was, indeed, a matter of interest to note that he did not possess the modern means of propaganda and mass communication, like the radio, the press and the like but only his vocal cord and his camel; otherwise he would have shaken the ancient world to its foundations.

The poetry of the Jahiliyah period was national in form but not in spirit. Its theme was not the Arab nation but the Arab tribe and all that it stood for. In their songs and poems, in their *rajaz* and *qasidahs*, the Jahiliyah poets sang of war, of their tribes, of feats of prowess of their tribal heroes, the wonderful qualities of their camels and, above all, of fair women and innumerable sweethearts they saw or met or loved. "The pre-Islamic poetry shows nothing sweeter to the Arab of the desert than the stealthy tracking of the prey, the attack at early dawn and the carrying away of

the spoils whether cattle, crops, or captives." But, as we said above, these poems and odes of ancient Arabia are one of our important sources of information of the history of those remote ages. They throw light on all aspects of pre-Islamic Arabia. Hence it is said, "Poetry is the public register of the Arabs."

Moral life. Moral acts and precepts are the dynamic aspects of the social life of a people. The moral life of the ancient Arabs also reflects the dichotomy of the Jahiliyah period. The good and the evil, the noble and the ignoble were mixed together in the character and conduct of the ancient Arabs. Owing to their perpetual tribal wars and equally perpetual economic distress and hunger, these desert-dwellers had developed many qualities of fighters, and pioneers. They were brave, courageous, hospitable, and generous. They loved freedom and were deeply loyal to their group, clan or tribe. As the pre-Islamic poetry shows us, the Arabs of the Jahiliyah Age held in great esteem four moral virtues, viz, *ziyafah* or hospitality or liberality, *hamasah* i.e. fortitude and enthusiasm, *muru'ah* i.e. manliness and courage, and *ird* i.e. honour. To these may be added a moral virtue of political nature, namely, *asabiyah* which meant a boundless and unconditional loyalty to one's clan or "*qawm*" as they called it, and to its chief, its customs and traditions. But these virtues were vitiated by some equally evil tendencies of their character and conduct. Among them two are worth remarking, namly. the Arab individualism and spirit of revenage. To them may be added some positive moral evils and social vices, such as their brutality, lying, breaking of promises or trust, and many other immoralities of sexual nature.

Their Virtues. The Jahiliyah Arabs measured their courage and manliness by the number of raids undertaken, their liberality by the number of camels offered to strangers and guests, their hospitality by the number of men entertained, and their kindliness and generosity by the help and protection rendered to the poor, the orphan and the helpless. Their honour was shown in the protection given to a fugitive; the right of asylum was considered sacred and was rigidly respected regardless of the crime of the refugee, or the price put on his head. We need not repeat here the stories of Hatim at-Tai, and his liberality.

Their vices. These virtues were, however, carried to excess and became vices. Liberality of a Jahiliyah Arab degenerated into prodigality, his courage into revengefulness, his manliness into senseless barbarity, and brutality, while his hospitality did not restrain him from robbing defenceless wayfarers, lonely outcasts. or from plundering weaker tribes. Trifling disputes led to blood-feuds and kindled tribal wars which consumed the energy and wasted the resources of the participants. These evils were caused

by the socio-economic crisis of the Jahiliyah period and by the tribal structure of its society. The tribe was the basic unit of Arab society. The Jahiliyah Arabs, faced with the crisis and the breakdown of their tribal order, were incapable of rising to a higher social unity. They were imprisoned within their tribal system, which, of course, was unable to provide them with a higher, wider and nobler conception of national ideals and standards rising above the restricted sphere of tribal or clannish loyalties and interests. Hence the degeneration of their moral values and precepts. Had there been higher social standards and ideals, and national laws and authority, their virtues would have wider field of operation, because they would have been able to devote their good qualities to national ends and activities. As such they atrophied and degenerated into the anti-social individualistic purposes or were bent into the service of the limited tribal ends. Absence of a central government and national law was responsible for the lack of peace and order in this period and the consequent degeneration and lack of progress of the Jahiliyah Arabs. The emergence of Islam remedied this socio-political weakness of Arab life for several centuries to come.

Arab individualism and vindictiveness Their inability to rise to a higher socio-political order was also due to the individualism and vindictiveness of the ancient Arabs. The spirit of revenge and hatred of enemies, writes a recent author, was an important element in the mentality of the pagan Arab. The man who exhibited kindness towards his enemies was regarded as good-for-nothing coward. This spirit is well-illustrated by the following verse of a Jahilyah poet:—

Humble him who humbles thee, close tho' be your kinship:
If thou canst not humble him, wait till he is in thy grip.
Befriend him while thou must; strike hard when thou hast him on the hip.

The law of Moses prevailed among the ancient Arabs. Blood called for blood on the good old principle of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The murder of a man could be avenged by the murder of any one of his blood relatives, and if none was available, then by the murder of anyone of his tribe. It was, however, commendable that blood money might be accepted, which was equal to a hundred camels. They believed that if a murdered man was not avenged, his soul took the shape of an owl or 'hama' and shrieked for vengeance, crying *Isquni* ! *Isquni* ! (Give me water, Give me water) till so avenged. The pagan Arab's individualism revealed itself in the form of aggressive and fissiparous tendency of "*bellum omnium contra omnes*"—the war of all against all. He fought with tribes near and far,—with his neighbours, his relatives

and, in case he could find no one to fight, then with his brother.

Religious Life. It also revealed the same tendency towards the grand and the grotesque, towards the sublime and the superstitious, as the Jahiliyah Arabs showed in all other aspects of their life. Their religious life and beliefs ranged from the worship of One Supreme God, which they significantly called Allah, to the worship of rough stones, sand-heaps, and, in case they failed to find any other object of worship, then sticks of wood or the small sand-pits which they had dug up to cook their meals a few minutes before.

Their gods and goddesses. The ancient Arabs were essentially polytheistic: they worshipped many gods and goddesses. Though they believed Allah to be the Supreme God, but His worship was not very common, nor belief in him very deep. Every tribe had its own god or goddess: even every family had its own household deity. The most important of these gods and goddesses were *al-Hubal*, *al-Uzza*, *al-Lat*, *al-Manat*, and such other lesser deities as *Yaghush*, *Wadd*, *Nasr*, etc. Al-Hubal was a special god of the Quraysh of Mecca. Al-Lat, al-Uzza, and al-Manat were female deities. Among the Bedouin Arabs, they represented the goddesses of the Sun, the planet Venus, and Fortune respectively, but in Mecca they were regarded as 'daughters of Allah'. The worsip of al-Lat was wide-spread. As Allah means 'the God', so al-Lat means 'the goddess'. She was really the mother-goddess, the goddess of fertility who was worshipped throughout antiquity. In ancient Arabia she became the Sun Goddess. Taif, near Mecca, was particularly a centre of her worship. She was also worshipped by the various Bedouin tribes, *e.g.* the Hawazin. Al-Uzza 'the Mighty One' was worshipped by several Arab tribes, such as the Ghatafans, the Khuza'a, Kinana, Thaqif of Taif, and lastly by the Quraysh. She was the goddess of Power or Strength but to the Arabs she became the 'Queen of Heaven'. Her temple was at Nakhla, between Mecca and Taif. It consisted of three acacia trees in one of which she revealed hereself. Al-Manat was the goddess of fate, and controlled the individual's fortune. She was worshipped both at Medina and Mecca. She was even a domestic deity.

Their idols and temples. All these gods and goddesses were worshipped as idols or images of stones, placed in a sanctuary or temple. For instance, the sanctuary of al-Lat was at Taif, that of al-Uzza was at Nakhla, of al-Hubal at Ka'aba, and so on. They were worshipped there with special rites and ceremonies and sacrifices. Camels, goats, sheep and in few cases even human beings were sacrificed, and their blood poured at the alter, while the worshippers danced around the idol. But many of these idols were rough stones, badly shaped. The worshippers kissed the

stone or touched it with their hands, believing that by this contact they would acquire holiness. Most of the ancient Arabs were heathens of the most primitive type. They believed that gods or spirits dwelt in stones, rocks, trees, or wells. In South Arabia the frankincense tree was considered sacred; the acacia trees at Nakhla were the abode of the goddess al-Uzza. "Going out on a journey the ancient Arabs would carry four stones with them, three to make a hearth, and the fourth to serve for an object of worship". Among the temples, the temple of Ka'ba gradually assumed greatest importance. It became the national pantheon of Arabia. It contained 360 idols.

Superstitions. The ancient Arabs were very superstitious. They believed that jinns or spirits dwelt in every place in the desert. To the gods belonged the places inhabited by men; to the *jinns* belonged the unknown and untrodden parts of the desert. If a man became mad, they believed that he was possessed by a jinn, hence called '*majnun*'. There were good jinns and bad jinns. The spirit of the cultivated land was a good spirit, while that of the arid region was a bad jinn. For instance, '*bal*' was the jinn of the springs and underground water. In short, religion of the Arabs of the Jahiliyah period was steeped in superstitions, and idol-worship and fetishism; "the time of Ignorance was a time of chaos."

Other Religions. During the period of Ignorance, several other religions, *e.g.* Christianity, Judaism, Magianism or the fire-worship of Persia, Sabaeanism or Star-worship, also existed in Arabia. Christianity was found in Northern Arabia and in the Yeman. The Ghassan, the Taghlib and several other Bedouin tribes had accepted this faith. The Jews, who had fled from Palestine due to the persecutions of the Romans, the Greek and the Christian rulers of Palestine and Syria, had taken refuge in the fertile valley of Hijaz and Yeman. Their colonies existed at Khayber, Yathrib, Taima, and in Sana. The Magians or the Zoroastrians, the fire-worshippers of Persia, were mostly found in eastern Arabia, which was under the direct influence of the Persian empire. But none of these religions affected the ancient Arabs very much. It was mainly due to their own weaknesses. The Christians were quarrelling among themselves, as they were divided into two main sects, the Monophysites and the Nestorians. They quarrelled on the question whether Christ was a man or a god, or how the three, God, Christ and Holy Ghost, could become one or one could be divided into three. These quarrels were carried to the point of the sword and great amount of Christian blood was shed. Even morally the Christians did not present an attractive picture ; their particular weaknesses were drinking and gambling. All they had learnt from their faith was the practice of wine-bibbing. To the Arabs a Christian was necessarily a wine-merchant. Christianity

had lost all driving force to bring about moral reformation. The Jews were also no better. Their religion was based on racialism and a sort of caste system. That was the reason why the Jews in Arabia were not eager to convert the Arabs to their faith, but kept themselves aloof and distinct from the native people. Their exclusiveness and airs of superiority were not the things to attract the simple Arabs to their faith. They believed and even believe to-day that they are a 'chosen people', destined to rule the world, like the Nazi Germans of recent times. Such an attitude could not attract many converts to Judaism. So, we may conclude that the religious life of the Jahiliyah period was as dark as its political and social conditions. Superstition, idolatry aud degenerated forms of Christianity and Judaism held the people in a thraldom rigorous and undisputed. But all this was transformed within a short time of one generation by the rise of Islam.

The World at the advent of Islam. The condition of the world in the Sixth century A.D. was equally dark and dismal. The great religions, Christianity, Judaism, etc., were in a state of decline and demoralisation. Except in Europe, where the great Pope Gregory had improved it, the eastern Christianity of the Byzantine Empire was made complicated by its quarrelling monks and bishops, emperors and followers, who were cutting each other's throats in the process. The conditions of Jewish and Magian religions were equally corrupt. Just like the Greek and Persian Empire, the conditions in India were deplorable. Buddhism was on the decline; a new Hinduism was resurgent. But the new Hinduism was also caste-ridden, ritualistic and full of superstitions and fetishism. The Brahmins, had become the dominant power and were worshipped as demi-gods. The position of women had degraded; *sati* and female infanticide were common. Young girls were made to dance before the idols and satisfy the lust of the Brahmin priests and the worshippers. Hence in India, as in Iran and in the Byzantium, all the forces of evil, immorality and vice were in ascendancy.

The political life of the world in the Sixth Century A. D. was equally miserable. The Empires of Greece and Persia were at loggerheads with each other. In 565 A. D. Emperor Justinian died and was succeeded by several weak emperors. At that time, Persia was ruled by an energetic king, Chosroes II, who at once invaded the neighbouring provinces of the Byzantine empire and captured Syria, Egypt and Cappadocia (Asia Minor). At last, in 610 A. D., when the Holy Prophet began his preaching of Islam, a new Greek emperor, named Heraclius, inflicted a final defeat on the Persians when they approached Constantinople and, from 610 to 628 A. D., recovered all the provinces which had been lost to his empire during the weak reigns of his predecessors. This was

the time when Mecca had fallen to Islam. Thus at the time of the emergence of Islam, the wars were raging in the north of Arabia, spreading bloodshed, pestilence, tyranny and oppression. The subjects of these rulers were suffering from heavy taxation, oppression and tyranny of foreign armies and rulers.

Conclusion. It was at such a time that Muhammad, (peace be on him) appeared. "The degraded condition of the human intellect, both in Europe and Asia, when Muhammad (peace be on him) appeared as a Prophet:" writes Dr. Taylor, "barbaric pride and pontific luxury oppressed the West, effeminacy, meanness and treachery ruled in the East ; Rome and Constantinople seemed equally incapable of reformation, and it required a violent exertion to break the fetters which indolence, superstition and fraud had combined to impose upon mankind." Another author puts the condition of the world at the advent of Islam in these words, "Death,—mental, moral and spiritual death—had overtaken the human race, and darkness prevailed everywhere, clouding the beliefs and perverting the actions of the people."

The beginning of the Seventh century of the Christian era, as has been rightly said, was an epoch of disintegration—national, social and religious : its phenomena were such as have always involved a fresh form of positive faith, to recall all wandering forces to the inevitable track of spiritual evolution 'towards the integration of personal worship'. They all pointed to the necessity of a more organic revelation of divine government than attained by Judaism or Christianity. Incessant war for supremacy, perpetual internecine strife, combined with the ceaseless wrangling of creeds and sects, had sucked the life-blood out of the hearts of nations, and the peoples of the earth, trodden under the iron heels of a lifeless sacerdotalism, were crying to God from the misdeeds of their masters. As Ameer Ali writes, "Never in the history of the world was the need so great, the time so ripe, for the appearance of a Deliverer." And the need was the greatest in the dark Peninsula of Arabia. "The time" says Washington Irving, "at length arrived when Arabia's discordant tribes were to be united into one creed, and animated by one common cause ; when a mighty genius was to arise, who should bring together these scattered limbs, animate them with his own enthusiastic and daring spirit and lead them forth, a giant of the desert, to shake and overturn the empires of this earth."

Chapter 2

MECCA AND THE EARLY LIFE OF THE HOLY PROPHET

The city of Mecca—Its geography and History. In the south-western corner of Hijaz, amidst the double range of dry and barren hills, is situated the city of Mecca. It lies in a waterless valley, which forms a basin in the middle of which lie Mecca. Hence Mecca has always been well-known for its dryness, barrenness, its intense heat, its suffocating winds and inhospitable climate. In such a place agriculture was impossible, industry could not flourish; only trade could be possible, for which Mecca became famous long before the rise of Islam.

Three things determined the rise of Mecca to influence, power and wealth. Firstly, its wells, among which the Zamzam is historically the most famous, which attracted the nomadic tribes around Mecca to come there for water and settlement. Secondly, its sanctuary of Ka'ba, founded by Abraham and his son, Ishmael, which became gradually the national pantheon of the ancient Arabs. Thirdly, its trading position, because Mecca lay on a junction of the great trade-routes which traversed from Yeman to Syria and Iraq. These factors made Mecca an important place after the fall of the Yemani kingdom of Sana in the fourth century A. D., described in the previous chapter.

When the Ka'ba was founded by Abraham and Ishmael, Mecca did not exist. For several centuries after, it was no more than a camping ground for the neighbouring nomadic tribes. Then, probably in the first century of the Christian era, the Beni Jurhum acquired the guardianship of the Ka'ba and laid the foundations of the city of Mecca, which was then no more than a permanent encampment of few huts. But it had then already become a religio-commercial centre of increasing importance. The chiefs of the Beni Jurhum styled themselves as kings or *maliks*. In the beginning of the third century A. D. a South Arabian tribe, named Beni Khuza'a, forced to leave its southern homeland, overthrew the Jurhumite power and became the masters of Mecca and the guardians of its sanctuary, Ka'ba. In the meanwhile a new rival was rising among the former Ishmaelite tribes. It was the Beni Quraysh, a junior branch of the Adnanites. This tribe was also a nomadic tribe which wandered in the desert around Mecca.

The Rise of the Quraysh. Beni Quraysh were the descendants of Fihr, who was surnamed Quraysh. He lived in the third

century A. D. He had a descendant, named Qussay, who flourished during the fifth-century. He had married the daughter of the last Khuzaite chief, after whose death, he drove out the Beni Khuza'a from power in Mecca. He invited the wandering families of his tribe to settle in the centre of the city, around the Ka'ba, while the less important families of the Quraysh were settled in the outskirts of the city. Although other tribes continued to dwell in Mecca, but the power, wealth, government of Mecca and the guardianship of the Ka'ba passed into the hands of the Quraysh, especially of the ten leading families of Banu Quraysh who dwelt around the Ka'ba.

The city-state of Mecca. Qussay laid the foundation of religious prominance and political power of the Quraysh by acquiring into his hands five kinds of functions. They were the functions of *nadwa*, *liwa*, *rifadha*, *hijaba* and *siqaya*. By *nadwa* was meant the power to summon the council of the Quraysh tribe, called the '*dar-un-Nadwa*. It was attended by the heads of the families of the Quraysh, if they were above forty years of age. Qussay convoked and presided at this council, a symbol of his political power. By *liwa* was meant the power to command the army of the Quraysh. Liwa was the standard of the Quraysh. Qussay knew the importance of the pilgrimage to Ka'ba which was performed by thousands of the Arabs every year. In order to entertain the poor pilgrims, he impressed upon the Quraysh the necessity of paying a sort of annual poor-tax, called the *Rifadha*, which he applied in feeding the poor pilgrims. Hence rifadha became the power to impose and collect a tax for the purpose of supplying food to the pilgrims. Qussay also held the keys of the Ka'ba, called the *hijaba* and he presided at the worship of the gods at Ka'ba. Lastly, scarcity of water was acutely felt at the time of pilgrimage, when thousands of pilgrims had assembled in the waterless valley of Mecca. Qussay also assumed the power of the *Siqaya*, or the supply of water from the wells of Mecca and its vicinity. He thus united in his own person all the principal political, civil, military and religious functions of the little republic of Mecca, and made his tribe its masters. After his death in 480 A. D., his eldest son, Abd ud-Dar, exercised all these functions. On the death of Abd ud-Dar, a dispute broke out among his sons and the sons of Abd Manaf, a brother of Abd ud-Dar about the distribution of these functions and powers. This was the first of the disputes among the Quraysh. They were an aggressive but shrewd people. Their disputes never ended in a war but in a compromise. So they now decided that the sons of Abd ud-Dar would perform the functions of the hijaba, nadwa and liwa, while the sons of Abd Manaf would exercise the functions of the rifadha and siqaya. The eldest son of Abd Manaf was Abd ush-Shams, who was a poor man and therefore could not perform these expensive duties. He entrusted them to his younger

but richer brother, named Amr, who soon came to be known as Hashim.

The ancestors of the Holy Prophet: Hashim. Like most other Qurayshites, Hashim was a rich merchant. According to a tradition, the four sons of Abd Manaf traded in the four directions of Arabia; the eldest son, Abd Shams, cultivated trade relations with Abyssinia, the second son, Hashim, with Syria, the third son, al-Muttalib, with the Yeman, and the fourth, Naufal, with Iraq. But among them Hashim became the richest. He is said to have started the custom of sending two caravans from Mecca, one in winter to the Yeman and the other in summer to Syria. He had married a Yathribite lady, to whom was born a son, named Shayba, who later came to be called Abdal Muttalib. Hashim died at Ghazza in Syria while he was there on a commercial mission. After his death in 510 A. D. his younger brother, Muttalib, exercised the functions of the rifadha and siqaya. When Hashim's son, Shayba, grew up to manhood, he was brought to Mecca from Yathrib by his uncle, Muttalib. But the people of Mecca took him for a slave of Muttalib and called him Abdal Muttalib, by which name he was known ever afterwards.

Abdal Muttalib. When Muttalib died in 520 A. D. his nephew Abdal Muttalib, succeeded to his functions of the Rifadha and Siqaya and he also became the head of the Banu Hashim. He was the custodian of the Ka'ba and the distributor of food and water among the pilgrims who came to the 'House of Allah'. He also rediscovered the well of Zamzam which had been buried under sand for some time past. Abdal Muttalib had six daughters and twelve sons. One of his sons was Abdullah, who was very dear to him. When 25 years of age, Abdullah was married to Amina. Soon after his marriage, he left on a commercial mission for Syria. On his return, he stayed in Yathrib, where he died.

Birth of the Holy Prophet—570 A.D. Four months after the death of Abdullah, a son was born to him, whom the loving grandfather, Abdal Muttalib gave the name of Muhammad (Sm). The birth of the Holy Prophet took place on the 20th April, 570, in the Year of the Elephant. Two months before his birth, the city of Mecca was invaded by Abrahah, the Abyssinian ruler of Yeman, who wanted to destroy the Ka'ba. His army included an elephant, the animal which the Arabs had never seen before and whose huge size frightened them a lot. Abdal Muttalib, the custodian of the Ka'ba and the leader of Mecca, tried to negotiate with the invader but failed in his mission. He prayed to the God of Ka'ba to save the city from the calamity. Smallpox broke out in the army of Abrahah and decimated it. The Abyssinians had, therefore, to retreat from Mecca with all haste and the Quraysh

heaved a sigh of relief. Because of the elephant, the year of Abrahah's invasion was known among the Arabs as the Year of the Elephant.

Childhood of the Holy Prophet. Owing to the unhealthy climate of Mecca, it was the custom of the richer sections of the Quraysh to entrust their newly-born children to the nurses of the Bedouin tribes of Najd. Soon after his birth, the child Muhammad was also given over to the famous Halima of the tribe of Banu Sa'd, a branch of the Hawazin, who dwelt to the south-east of Mecca, in the fertile valleys around Taif. He lived with the Banu Sa'd for five years. The open air of the desert had a very salutary effect on his health. He also acquired the pure Arabic of the Bedouins of Najd, of which he was always proud afterwards. At the age of five, Halima brought him back to his mother. A year after, when his mother had taken him to Yathrib, she died on the return journey to Mecca. Thus Muhammad (Sm) lost both his father and mother when he was hardly six. His grand-father, Abdal Muttalib, took him into his loving protection. But the grand old man of the Quraysh who was then nearly 90 years old, died two years after. Before his death, he entrusted his grandson to the care and custody of his son, Abu Talib, with whom Muhammad (Sm) lived till he grew into manhood. However, during his childhood our Holy Prophet had seen the death of the loving ones and felt the pangs of separation which must have deeply affected his meditative mind.

Boyhood and Youth. On his death, Abdal Muttalib had distributed his offices between his two sons: Abu Talib was placed in charge of the Rifadha and al-Abbas that of Siqaya. Abu Talib was also a merchant, though not one of the richest in Mecca, as the Banu Hashim once were. He kept an up-to-date clothing store and sold perfumes. He was also a merchant and sometimes led the caravans to the north in person. He, however, bestowed great love and care on his orphaned nephew. Once when the Holy Prophet was nearly twelve years of age, he accompanied his uncle on a trade mission to Bosra in Syria. It was during this journey that the Arab caravan passed by the hut of a Christian hermit, named Bahira, who noticed the signs of future prophethood in the boy Muhammad (Sm). The journey which lasted for several months, had a deep impression on the youthful Muhammad as he had the opportunity of seeing the cities of Palmyra, Petra, Amman, etc., which were the ancient cities of Arabia and also the Christian cities and civilisation of Syria of those days.

War of Fijar or the Sacrilegious War. When the Holy Prophet was nearly sixteen years old, a war broke out between the Quraysh

and the Hawazin. As this war began during the 'sacred months' when war between Arab tribes was forbidden, it was called the Harb al Fijar or the Sacrilegious War. It was fought for several years between the Quraysh and Kinana on one side and the Hawazin on the other. Its causes were several. Outwardly the causes were (*i*) the insult to a Hawazin maid by a Qurayshite youth in the great fair of Ukaz, which was held during the 'Forbidden months'; (*ii*) the boasts of a poet who was struck by an indignant Hawazinite; and (*iii*) the insults heaped by a creditor on a Kinanite debtor, which made the Kinana and the Hawazin fight at the time of the Ukaz fair.

The real causes, however, were deeper still. They were, firstly, the imperialist intrigues of Persia and the Byzantium, and, secondly, the commercial ambitions of the Quraysh. Both these causes were intertwined. The Sacrilegious War began at a time when Persian Chosroes II had defeated the Byzantines. He had driven out the Abyssinians, the Christian allies of the Byzantines, from Yeman and had got control of South Arabia. After defeating their rivals on the military field, the Persian King now planned to destroy the economic hold of the Byzantine Empire over Arabia by cutting off its ancient life-line of trade with Arabia and India which was carried across Central Arabia and Hijaz. The plan was to divert the ancient trade from Syria to Hira and Iraq. But the Persian plan threatened the Quraysh of Mecca more than the Byzantines. They had a great interest in the Arabian trade with the neighbouring countries. They used to purchase the Yemani products, such as the frankinsence, etc., and sell them to the Byzantine merchants in Syria. But when the Persians captured Yeman, their vassal, the Prince of Yeman decided to divert this trade from Syria via Mecca, to Iraq via Najd. So, a caravan laden with the lucrative Yemani goods was passing through the Ukaz fair after securing the route permit from a chief of the Hawazin tribe But the Quraysh would not let it go unchallenged. They sent a friendly Bedouin chief who attacked and plundered the Yemani caravan at the time when the Ukaz fair was held. This became the real cause of the Harb al-Fijar, or the Sacrilegious War, which lasted with an interval for several years. Holy Prophet also took part in it, when he was about twenty. At last it ended by the Quraysh paying blood-money. But they had achieved their purpose. The Persian attempt to divert the western trade failed, while the Quraysh succeeded in capturing the Yemani market as well. This War was followed soon after by a League of the Just, called the Hilf al Fudhul.

Hilf al Fudhul. The War of Fijar had shown one weakness in the mercantile republic of Mecca: there was no supreme authority or a supreme ruler in it. The Quraysh tribe was then divided into ten clans, each headed by its own chief, but none of them powerful

enough to rule the city. This state of affairs created a situation in which acts of injustice went unpunished. The result was that the weak, the poor, and the wronged suffered without any protection or justice. There was no one now to exercise the same kind of over-ruling authority which was once exercised by Qussay, or Hashim or even Abdal Muttalib. Every one of the separate clans neglected to punish its members for oppression and wrongdoing. No chief at Mecca was ready to punish the evil-doer or defend the injured. Right was not enforced: wrong remained unpunished. Seeing such a state of affairs, four of the ten clans of the Quraysh, namely Banu Hashim led by az-Zubair, an uncle of the Holy Prophet, Asad, Zuhrah and Taym, allied themselves into an alliance or league under an oath or Hilf, that "they would take the part of the oppressed, and see his claim fulfilled, so long as a drop of water remained in the ocean, or would satisfy it from their own resources". This was the Hilf al Fudhul or the League of the Just. It is said that one reason why it was called 'Fadhul' was that the names of it four leading members were Fazl, Fazal, Muffazzal and Fuzail, collectively called Fuzul or Fudhul. Whatever be the reason of its name, the League of the Just was able to provide protection and justice, prevent injustice and act as a means of enforcing restitution. The Holy Prophet who was present on the occasion of the Oath was greatly happy with its just aims. As he said in after years, "I would not exchange for the choicest camel in all Arabia the remembrance of being present at the oath which we took in the house of Abdallah ibn Judan, when the Beni Hashim, Zuhra ibn Kilab and Taym ibn Murra swore that they would stand by the oppressed." The Hilf al Fudhul, however, indicated a new alignment among the ten clans of the Quraysh, a union between the poorer clans against the richer clans *viz*., the Ummayya, the Mukhzum, Naufal and others, who stood aloof from the League of the Just. It was amid such economic divisions and rivalries that Islam rose and fought its initial struggles against the idol-worshippers of Mecca. The defenders of idolatry were mostly the very rich families and individuals, especially of the Ummayya and the Mukhzum clans, while the comparatively poorer sections and persons sided with Islam.

Prophet's Occupation. During his youth, the Holy Prophet journeyed several times to Syria, Palestine and, according to certain traditions, even to Iraq, Asia and Abyssinia, as a merchant, a travelling salesman, and a commercial agent. He also travelled in different parts of Arabia, and visited such famous fairs as that of Ukaz. It has been rightly said that when he reached the age of 25, he was the most travelled young man in Mecca, a city which boasted then of many national and international traders and merchants who had themselves travelled all over Arabia and the neighbouring countris. He personally observed

the poverty, misery and other evils from which humanity suffered. He listened to the preachings and discourses of the learned and the divines among the Christians, Jews and others during his journeys and visits. All of them left permanent impressions on his mind and thoughts. These commerical journeys were undertaken as a source of aid to his uncle, Abu Talib, whose fortunes were not sufficient to maintain a large family as he had. In between his commercial undertakings, the Holy Prophet also worked as shepherd, which afforded him opportunity for quiet thought and meditation far from the maddening crowds of Mecca.

Marriage with Khadija. During his commercial missions Holy Prophet had acted with singular honesty, integrity and efficiency, for which he came to be known as 'al-Amin', 'the faithful' among his fellow-citizens. Now, the women of the Quraysh were as much interested in trade and in trading caravans as their menfolk. Several of them were rich merchants in their own right. One of them was a Quraysh lady of great position and wealth named Khadija bint Khuwaylid of the Beni Naufal clan. She used to send her merchandise by means of agent to Syrian markets. At that time she was in need of a trustworthy person to perform these commercial duties. Muhammad (Sm) was recommended to her as such a person. She sent him with her goods to Syrian. He performed his duties so honestly that Khadija was able to earn great profit from her investment. The honesty, the good behaviour, and polite manners of Muhammad (Sm) so pleased his employer that Khadija fell in love with him and proposed marriage, which he accepted. Although Khadija's uncle did not approve of this alliance because he wanted to marry his niece to a rich Quraysh chief, he also agreed to it in the end. At the time of his marriage, Muhammad's age was 25, while Khadjia's age was about 40 years, but this union proved to be very happy and affectionate. Khadija proved herself to be a loving wife, a devoted helpmate and the most loyal supporter of the Prophet in all his ordeals and struggles. As a matter of fact, Islam owes its success more to her than to any other person during its days of trials and persecutions. That is why the Holy Prophet always cherished the most loving memories of this gentle lady who died when the Prophet was still the most persecuted person in Mecca.

The immediate advantage of his marriage with Khadija was a great improvement in the financial condition of the Holy Prophet. He had now enough wealth and income to devote himself to a life of prayer, meditation and retirement, which he loved so much. He went away from the hustle and bustle of the commercial city into the hills around Mecca. There in a

cave on the Mount Hira, he often remained whole nights plunged in profoundest thought, in prayers and fasting for several days and even weeks. Thus he lived there for fifteen years till the call to Prophethood.

His Arbitration. One significant event during these fifteen years was the arbitration of a dispute among the Quraysh tribes. It arose over the depositing of the Black Stone of the Ka'ba. Because of frequent floods, the holy sanctuary of the Ka'ba was in need of repairs. After much hesitation, the Quraysh leaders decided to undertake its rebuilding in 605 A. D. But when the question of depositing the sacred stone in its old place arose, each of the Quraysh family was eager to have this honour of replacing it. Arabs are ever inclined to flare up quickly. It was quite possible that the Quraysh would fight over this Black Stone issue. But the Holy Prophet's wise intervention saved a bloody situation. Before the Quryash had actually come to blows, their leaders agreed to seek the arbitration of the man who would enter the sacred precincts first in the morning next day. So they posted men to watch and see who enters the Ka'ba first of all the next day. Now it was the habit of the Holy Prophet to go to the Ka'ba for prayers early in the morning. As he did so they asked him to arbitrate in the Black Stone dispute. With great tact and wisdom, the Prophet placed the sacred Stone in a blanket and asked all the leaders of the Quraysh to lift it to the level where it was to be placed and then himself deposited it in its place. Thus, amid cries of 'al-Amin' and the applause of the Quraysh, he saved a knoty situation by his wisdom and diplomacy which would have caused much bloodshed in Mecca.

The Call : 610 A. D. When the Holy Prophet was nearly forty years of age, one night while seated in deep thought and meditation in the cave of the Mount Hira, the angel Gabriel came to him with a piece of silk brocade on which some words were written and said, "Read". The Prophet replied, "I cannot read!" But the angel repeated his orders three times and said :

> Read in the name of thy Lord who created
> Man from blood coagulated
> Read ! Thy Lord is wondrous kind
> Who by the pen has taught mankind
> Things they knew not, being blind.

This was the first revelation. It affected the Holy Prophet so deeply that he trembled all over and turned pale. He rose from his seat and hurried home where he related his vision to his wife. She comforted him and told him that he was the

Prophet. In order to confirm her opinion, she went to her cousin, named Waraqa, who was a 'hanif',. He also supported her. Encouragements from Khadija and Waraqa comforted Muhammad (Sm). Soon after the Holy Prophet received the message from Gabriel that he was the Messenger of Allah, His Rasul, and was to convey His Message of Islam to the idolators of Mecca and the world.

CHAPTER 3

FROM THE CALL TO THE MIGRATION

610 A. D. to 622 A. D.

We now stand at the threshold of the most critical period in the life of the Holy Prophet, *i. e.*, his life at Mecca as a Prophet. It was a period of about thirteen years. The most important events of this period may be highlighted here as below:—

610 First revelation and the First Muslims.

613 Beginning of Public Preaching; the Early Converts.

614 Entry into the House of al-Arqam. Beginning of the Opposition of the Quraysh and their persecution of the Early Muslims.

615 Emigration to Abyssinia.

616 Commencement of the Boycott of Banu Hashim; Shi'b Abi Talib.

619 End of the Boycott; death of Khadija and of Abu Talib; Journey to Taif.

620 First Medinan converts.

621 The First Oath of Aqabah.

622 The Second Oath of Aqabah: Migration from Mecca to Medina.

The Call and the First Muslims. As we have said in the previous chapter, the first revelation on Mount Hira agitated the Holy Prophet very much. But the encouragement of his understanding wife, Khadija, and the assurances of her cousin, Waraqa, comforted him very much. Soon after he received the message that he was to spread Islam among the idolaters of Mecca as the Messenger of Allah. At first he conveyed the Message privately to the close circle of his relatives and friends. It is universally accepted that Khadija was the first to believe in her husband and his message. But as regards the first man to accept Islam, there is an ancient controversy between the claims of three men, namely, Abu Bakr,

Ali and Zaid bin Harithah. The first two have their supporters. We can, however, put aside Ali's claim, because he was at the time of the Call a mere boy of nine who could not much understand the significance of his acceptance of Islam. Zaid, the freed slave and close and confidential friend of the Holy Prophet whom he treated as his adopted son, might well be the first man to accept Islam. But his humble position as a freed slave did not signify much importance to his conversion to Islam. Abu Bakr's position was quite different. He was a man of mature age, and of great postion among the dignitaries of Mecca and a rich merchant in its mercantile community. Politically, socially and historically his acceptance of Islam was the most important event in the early days of Islam. We may, therefore, consider him to be the first among the men to accept the message, although Ali and Zaid must have been his close seconds. For the first three years of his Ministry, the Holy Prophet converted the people of Mecca secretly and privately. During this period, twenty persons, including the four noticed above, accepted Islam, which included both the members of the Quraysh families and foreign residents of Mecca, mostly slaves. Some of these first Muslims became very famous in the later history of Islam. Among these twenty were the first four, Khadija, Abu Bakr, Ali and Zaid, the five whom Abu Bakr won to Islam, namely, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, the future conqueror of Persia, Zubair ibn al-Awwam, Othman bin Affan, the future third Caliph, Talha, a renowned warrior in after days, and Abdar Rahman bin Auf, a man of great wealth and character. Abdar Rahman brought four more new Muslims into the fold of Islam, among whom the name of Abu Obaida ibn al-Jarrah, the great Companion and the conqueror of Syria, is worth remarking. All of them, except Zaid, were Quraishites. The first Muslims also included several slaves among them, such as Hazrat Bilal, the great Muezzin of the Prophet, Abdullah bin Masud, a great companion who was described as 'small in body, but weighty in faith', and others. Tradition asserts that besides these twenty there were thirteen more who were also inclined towards Islam "before the entry of the Prophet into the house of al-Arqam". They included such names as al-Arqam himself, a rich merchant and Abu Hodhaifa bin Otba, who was a son of one of the Ummayyad chiefs.

Female converts. No movement in human history can succeed without the support, sympathy and assistance of the women. This was true of Islam as well. In a rigidly patriarchal society as that of ancient Mecca, women's role was necessarily one of secondary or passive nature, based on silent assistance, encouragement and exhortation. This was what the female converts did during the early days of Islam. None the less, as we have remarked already, the part which Khadija played was not of secondary but of cardinal importance in the emergence of Islam. To her Islam owes a debt

which is incalculable. The same is, to a lesser extent, true of the other wives of the Holy Prophet, whom he married after Khadija's death. The wives and daughters of some of the male converts were earnest and faithful professors of Islam. Their encouragement and exhortations were of great value to their husbands and relatives.

Beginning of Public Preaching and the Entry into the House of Al-Arqam. (613-16) During the first three years of his ministry, the Prophet preached the new faith privately and secretly. Encouraged by the success of converting about forty persons, he was now determined on more active measures and began to preach in public. It was at this time that he received the revelation ordering him to commence public ministry. Ibn Ishaq, the first biographer of the Holy Prophet says. "The God ordered His Prophet, three years after his commsssion, to declare publicly what had come to him from Him, to confront the people with God's word and to summon them to it." Thus he was ordered to 'arise and preach'. With this object in view, one day he assembled all the clans of the Quraysh on the hill of Safa, outside Mecca, where he warned them of God's displeasure at their idol-worship and called them to give up the evil ways and come to Islam. While others were yet silent, Abu Lahab, an uncle of the Holy Prophet, stood up angrily and uttered some evil words against the Prophet and walked away. Others also did the same. Disappointed with the commonalty of the Quraysh, the Prophet invited his own kinsmen to a dinner and, at the end of it, addressed them thus: "No Arab has offerred to his nation more precious advantages than those I bring you. I offer you happiness in this world and in the life to come. Who among you will aid me in this task ?" All remainad silent. Only Ali, who was then only twelve years old, stood up and said, "Prophet of God, I will aid thee." The Prophet took him under his arms. But his boyish enthusiasm only raised a derisive laughter from the older people and they dispersed to their homes. This meeting also ended in failure.

It was at this time, undeterred by the ill-success, the Prophet entered the house of al-Arqam, one of the first Muslims It was situated near the eastern gate of the Ka'ba. Many persons and pilgrims passed by this house. The Prophet could preach from this place easily and directly to the people. Hence for the next four years, the house of al-Arqam became an important meeting place where many were converted to Islam. That is why the house of al-Arqam came to be known in later times as the House of Islam. Traditions record about many a Muslim that "he was converted after the entry into the house of al-Arqam, and the preaching there." The last of the man to be converted there was Omar bin al-Khattab in the sixth year of the Prophetic Call.

Further conversions. During the four years of public preaching a large number of the Meccans were brought into the fold of Islam. They were perhaps as many as two hundred. Several of them became the most important Muslims in the later history of Islam due to their services and devotion to its cause, such as Hamza, the uncle of the Holy Prophet and Umar, the second Caliph. Their conversions occurred in a dramatic manner and at a time when the Qurayshite opposition and persecutions of the Muslims were reaching violent proportions. Hamza was fond of hunting. One day when he returned from one of his hunting excursions, a slave-girl of Abu Jahal told him how rudely and cruelly her master had treated Muhammad (Sm) that day and had wounded him. This news infuriated Hamza who loved his nephew very much. He at once went to the house of Abu Jahel and upbraided him for his cruel behaviour and challenged him to do his worst as he was also going to become a Muslim. So, from Abu Jahal's house, Hazrat Hamza went straight to the house of al-Arqam, and at once professed Islam.

As regards Umar, upto the sixth year of the Prophetic mission, he was one of the strongest opponents of Islam and of the Prophet. He was the chief of Banu Adi. One day he and other Quraysh leaders were assembled in the Ka'ba and were discussing what measures to adopt against the increasing influence and spread of Islam among their fellow citizens. Umar, who was a man of tempestuous and violent temper, announced that he would go and kill the Holy Prophet. While he was going towards the house of al-Arqam, with his murderous design, Sa'd bin abi Waqqas met him on the way and enquired the cause of his angry mood. Being told of the reason, Sa'd said that he must first set his own house in order and told Umar that his sister Fatima and her husband had become Muslims. This infuriated Umar utmost. He at once diverted himself to his sister's house, where he actually found her and her husband reciting the Quran. Having lost self-control, Umar slapped his sister hard in the face which began to bleed. But she replied courageously that she would follow the Prophet, no matter what Umar did. Her courageous defiance and her bleeding face touched the heart of her brother, who asked her to recite to him what she was reading. On hearing the verses of the Holy Book, Umar was a changed man. He at once announced that he too was a Muslim and went to the Holy Prophet in the house of al-Arqam and accepted Islam at his hands. His conversion was greeted by the Muslims with such a loud cry of joy that it reverbrated over whole of Mecca. Thus the Quraysh leaders assembled in the Ka'ba came to know that yet another of their plots against the Prophet had failed. But it also increased the intensity of their opposition to Islam and added more fuel to the fury of their persecutions of the Muslims.

A Review of Early Conversions. What sort of people accepted Islam in the early days of its emergence? The biographers of the Holy Prophet and the historians of early Islam have shown that three types of Meccans adopted the new faith. Firstly, those people became Muslims who were young and belonged to the junior cadres of the Quraysh community. The richer families and personalities of the Quraish kept themselves aloof from the new faith. Secondly, those Meccans accepted Islam who could not hope to rise to prosperity and riches in the capitalistic environment of the mercantile and competitive Mecca. They belonged either to the poor or the impoverished clans of the Quaraysh or belonged to those families of a clan which had been thrown into the background of social success, economic riches and political influence by their rival families which had captured both wealth and power. They were usually men of medium means. But, though they were merchants and traders of medium incomes, they were not men of mediocre attainments as the future was to show abundantly. As a matter of fact, they as well as the men of the first type provided the great warriors, leaders and statesmen and commanders of the early Islam. Their skill, knowledge and experience were the main factors of the success of Islam in subsequeant years. The grateful posterity remembers them as the most loyal Companions of the Holy Prophet. Thirdly, the early Muslims came mostly from among the slaves and freed slaves of the Quraysh and from among the resident aliens of Mecca who were called the confederates or clients of the Qurayshite clans and families. They were the 'weak people' of the early Muslim writers. Although they had been justly lauded for their piety, strength and sincerity of faith, but historically they played a role subordinate to the first two types of early Muslims. These Companions of the Holy Prophet became mostly the Quran-readers, and teachers of Islam, and did not have much share in military command or political power. In conclusion we may say that the success of Islam was, firstly, due to the young men who flocked under its banner, and secondly, due to the men of medium status in the society and politics of the pagan Mecca. To express the struggles of early Islam in the terminology of the present-day word, we may say that the rise of Islam was not due to the struggle, between the 'haves' and the 'have nots', but between the haves and the 'lesser haves', between the rich and the lesser rich or the impoverished rich. The latter could not hope to become rich or enfranchised once again so long as the old order of the mercantile Mecca remained unchanged.

The Growth of the Qurayshite Opposition and Persecutions of the Early Muslims. During the first three years of the Prophet's ministry, there was no opposition to Islam by the idolators of Mecca, because its preaching was private and confined to a restricted circle

of the Prophet's relatives and friends. First signs of opposition appeared when the Holy Prophet started public preaching, especially when he entered the house of al-Arqam, which had become the centre of his missionary and proselytising activities. Their opposition was, at first, expressed in the mild form of hostility mixed with curiosity. They mostly scoffed at the way the Muslim prayed and taunted at the revelations of the Holy Prophet. "There goes the son of Abdullah", they would remark slightingly when the Holy Prophet happened to pass by them, "who brings news from the Heaven". But when the Holy Prophet began to denounce their idol-worship and warned them of the dire consequences of their unbelief, and asserted the perdiction for their ancestors who died in unbelief, their opposition became more hostile and violent. Their scoffings changed into abuses and insolence, and their taunts into acts of violence and contumely. While they behaved towards Muhammad (Sm) and their fellow-Qurayshites with rudeness and insolence, they treated the poor Muslims and converted slaves and confederates with open acts of violence and cruelty.

Causes of the Quraysh Opposition and Hostility: The causes were religious, social, political and economic. The rise of Islam in Mecca ushered in a conflict between two ways of life and thought, one of Belief and the other of Unbelief. This conflict was reflected in all aspects of the Meccan life, society and politics.

1. Religious Causes. Islam taught the worship of One Supreme God and condemned the worship of the idols of stone which they had fashioned with their own hands. The Quraysh of Mecca were, however, addicted to the worship of their 360 idols set up in the Ka'ba. They were not ready to give it up at the denunciations of Muhammad (Sm) whom they regarded as an upstart preacher with ulterior motives of personal gain and glory. Moreover, the Qurayshites had no belief in life after death or about insurrection and 'the day of great reckoning', the talk of which by the Holy Prophet also distressed them not a little. They also felt angry when they heard the Prophet telling that their forefathers who died as idol-worshippers would suffer in the fires of Hell. The haughty Meccans here not ready to listen quietly to the warnings of the Holy Prophet. It was all the more so because the idol-worship at the Ka'ba was a source of social prestige and economic gain to the Quraysh, as they were its custodians. It had become the pantheon of the Arabian tribes. They assembled there in their thousands for pilgrimage, with offerings to their idol-gods and goddesses and also for purposes of exchanging their tribal goods with the foreign goods brought to Mecca by the Quraysh from Syria, Iraq, South Asia and other countries. Hitti remarks, "What they considered as heresy seemed to run counter to the best economic interests of the Quraysh as custodians of al-Ka'ba, the pantheon

of multitudinous deities and centre of a pan-Arabian pilgrimage."

2. **Social causes.** Closely intermingled with religious reasons were the social causes which excited the Qurayshite irritation and hatred because they injured their social prestige and pride. Every great movement in human history begins with the levelling effects of social equality and justice. Islam also stood for equality and fraternity. It also levelled down the distinctions between the rich and poor, the free and the slave, the high and the low among the Believers. To the haughty, aristocratic and class-conscious Qurayshites such a levelling down of social distinctions and differences was most repellent and hateful. "The majority of Muhammad's early converts were slaves or people of humble origin, though a few of the leading merchants of Mecca accepted Islam. History teaches us that any religious reformer who is determined to overthrow the existing order of society is bound to meet with the opposition of those whose interests are threatened by his innovations. Parties who enjoy financial, ecclesiastical, and social advantages from an established religion will not forego those privileges without a struggle, and in the last resort are prepared to kill the man who attacks them."

3. **Moral reasons.** Moral ideals and values of the pagan Qurayshites and Islam were diametrically opposed to each other, which necessarily led to a conflict of ideas and practice. The Quraysh stood for the habits, practices, and moral ideals and virtues of the Jahiliyah Period, while Islam upheld new ones, and condemned the old ones. Prof. E. G. Browne puts the moral situation of Mecca during Prophet's ministry in these words, "Personal courage unstinted generosity, lavish hospitality, unswerving loyalty to kinsmen, ruthlessness in avenging any wrong or insult offered to one's self or one's relations or tribesmen: these were the cardinal virtues of the old pagan Arab; while resignation, patience, subordination of personal and tribal interests to the demands of a common faith, unworldliness, avoidance of ostentation, and boastfulness, and many other things enjoined by Islam were merely calculated to arouse his derision and contempt" The ideals of the pagan Meccans were, like the Arabs of the Jahiliyah, honour and revenge. They were brave but boastful, generous to the extent of extravagance and prodigality, and loved freedom from all moral and social restraint and authority, except those of their own clan or tribe. They indulged in all the vices of sex, wine and war. For every injury on insult to their person, family or clan they were ready to inflict more injury, and returned evil by more evil. Islam condemned these evil habits and practices, which excited the ire and hatred of the Quraysh.

4. **Political causes.** Along with social changes, a new move-

ment brings about a new alignment of political forces and authority. In the little mercantile city-state of Mecca there was no fixed and permanent seat of political authority. It was enjoyed by the leader of such a family or clan who possessed more wealth, greater skill in managing men and affairs of the city and greater tact and diplomacy in dealing with the Arab tribes. As there were no laws or institutions to confine power in one family, it shifted from family to family along with the vicissitudes of economic fortunes and political skill. At first the family of Abd al-Dar, the eldest son of Qussay ruled Mecca. Then Banu Hashim, the forefathers of the Holy Prophet, rose to political influence and power in Mecca. With the death of Abdal Muttalib a third revolution in the politics of Mecca came when ultimately the rich and powerful clan of Banu Makhzum, with the support of Banu Umayya, came to dominate Meccan politics. The rise of Islam threatened the Makhzumi and Umayyad consortium with a new revolution. Hence their opposition to Islam, in which they were supported by other richer and powerful clans, such as the clans of the Sahm, the Jumah and the Naufal. Nevertheless, Banu Makhzum and Banu Umayya remained the Big Two of the Qurayshite opposition to Islam and the Holy Prophet, with this difference that at first the Makhdum were in ascendency, but after the death of many of their leaders in the Battle of Badr, political ascendancy in the city temporarily passed into the hands of Abu Sufiyan of the Umayyad clan. These political leaders of the Quraysh feared that if Islam destroyed their idol-gods it would also cause their downfall. Moreover, they feared that if Muhammad (Sm) succeeded in converting the majority of the Meccans he would inevitably rule the city also, thereby dislodging them from their position as heads of the Meccan mini-state. Inflated by their arrogance and power, they argued that if God were to send His Messenger, He could well select someone from among themselves and not a poor man of the impoverished Banu Hashim. As He had not done so, Muhammad (Sm) was obviously not a prophet but an imposter, a political fraud. They invented such other abusive terms in their hatred for the Holy Prophet as a lunatic, a soothsayer, a poet, a juggler and what not.

5. **Economic causes.** Deeper still lay the economic causes which fed the hatred of the Quraysh towards Islam and the Muslims to fever-heat. We have already pointed out the religious and social aspects of the economic situation, namely, the loss of income from idol-worship at the Ka'ba, and the levelling effects of the new religion in the society of Mecca. Furthermore, in ancient times politics and wealth went hand in hand. The leading families of the Quraysh feared that the loss of political domination would result in their impoverishment as well. The rise of Islam, however, threatened their economic position still more seriously, especially of the Big Two. The mercantile community of

Mecca had changed a lot in the direction of capitalistic evolution since the day of Qussay. In his days it was a community of petty merchants, trades and shopkeepers. But at the time of Prophet's birth, Mecca had become a centre of big business, high finance, banking and monopoly economy. Such a capitalistic evolution in modern times, as in Europe and U. S. A., is regarded as one of the greatest achievements of Man. But in ancient times in the slave-owning and tribalistic society, such economic developments caused much human sufferings and injustices, whether they took place in Mecca or Rome, Greece or Arabia, or Syria. In Mecca several Qurayshite families, especially of the Big Two clans of Makhzum and Umayya, became rich banking concerns, controlling the trade with Bedouin tribes and neighbouring countries. They acquired a monopoly in it and squeezed out many of the less fortunate rivals from trade, such as the Banu Hashim, Banu Abd al-Dar, Adi and others. The anti-social evils which resulted from this economic development were, firstly the impoverishment of the less fortunate families and clans of the Quraysh which could not compete with their big rivals, secondly, high interest or usury, and thirdly, the disruption of the tribal relations and customs of the Bedouin and town Arabs, not to mention the evil effects on their moral and social life which aggravated the vices of the Jahiliyah Days. As we have seen above, Islam was a movement of such persons, families and clans of the Quraysh, which had suffered much from these economic developments, and as were attracted to the new faith because it stood for social equality and justice. But these were the very reasons which made the big merchants, financiers and bankers ofthe richer families and clans of the Quraysh to condemn and oppose Islam and its followers. Thus the Islamic movement became a struggle between the old rich and the new rich, the less rich and the more rich, between the privileged and the underprivileged among the Quraysh. To the new rich and the privileged, when the Holy Prophet talked of social justice and equality, he appeared as a lunatic, a revolutionary, a disrupter of law and order, a magician, an enemy of their way of life and thought, and so on. And when they took a more charitable view of him, they thought that Muhammad (Sm) sought riches or a beautiful damsel for all the troubles he was creating for them. They sent one of their leaders, Otba bin Rabia, with such an offer. But he was quietly and resolutely put aside and returned a chastened man.

Such were, in short, the causes which now thoroughly alarmed the Quraysh. Their power and prestige, their wealth and ways of life were at stake. Therefore they opposed and resisted Islam with increasing hostility and violence. Every new conversion added fuel to the fury of their persecutions.

Their persecutions. The first and the most to suffer at the

hands of the Quraysh were the converted slaves, the poor Muslims, that is, the weak people among the Muslims. They were subjected to all kinds of tortures; they were beaten, roasted on the scorching sands of the midday sun of the Arabian noon, and even butchered in cold blood. Such was the treatment meted out to Bilal, the first muezzin of Islam. But he remained steadfast through all his sufferings. A slave pair, Yasar and his wife Sumiya, were tortured to death, while their son, Ammar bin Yasar, was cruelly treated, while another "weak" man, Khabbab, also suffered terribly at their hands. Nevertheless, these men were "weak" socially but not in character and faith.

As regards their own clansmen and kinsmen among the Muslims, the Qurayshite persecutors adopted a milder but a well-oraganised policy of chastisement. Each Qurayshite family was made responsible for punishing its own member who became a Muslim. As junior members of a clan and the young people of a family usually adopted Islam, the heads of the family or the leaders of the clan took them to task in order to force them to renounce their new faith. Thus, for instance, Uthman bin Affan, the future caliph, was beaten by his uncle; Zubair ibn al-Awwam by his uncle, while Sa'd ibn al-Waqqas was tortured by his own kinsmen.

At the same time, our Prophet was also subjected to increasing insults and rude treatment. When he happened to pass in a street or was at prayer, rubbish and sweepings were dumped on his head and thorns were strewn on his path. In these tortures, the wife of his uncle Abu Lahab who belonged to the powerful clan of the Banu Umayya, was in the forefront, for which reason she earned the Quranic stigma of the "bearer of faggots to hell'. But in spite of all their evil doings, the Quraysh failed to deter the Holy Prophet and his little band of a hundred or so loyal followers from the path of Truth and Justice. So they decided to adopt a policy of conciliation towards the Prophet (peace be on him).

When persecution failed, the Quraysh tried persuasion in order to dissuade the Prophet from preaching Islam. They sent one of their leaders, Utba bin Rabia, with the offer of wealth or a beautiful woman or even lordship over Mecca for the Prophet to choose, if only he would give up Islam. But the Holy Prophet offered them the Quranic promise to Allah's mercies and good tidings: 'Say, verily I am only a man like you. It is revealed unto me that your God is one God: wherefore direct your way straight unto Him; and ask pardon of Him for what is past". So impressed Utba was of the beauty of the Quranic verses that he returned to the Quraysh and advised them not molest Muhammad (Sm). He said that if he succeeded in his plans of uniting all the tribes of Arabia, he would pave the path to their lordship of Arabia, but if he failed

in his mission, it would cost them nothing. But they angrily rejected his suggestion. They next turned to Abu Talib, the loyal uncle and protector of the Holy Prophet, asking him to restrain his nephew from attacking their ancestoral faith or they would resort to more violent measures against him. Impressed by their angry demeanour, the loving uncle appealed to the Prophet not to bring disaster on himself and his family of Banu Hashim. The Holy Prophet was touched deeply by the kind words of his uncle, but replied resolutely, "O my uncle, if they placed the sun on my right hand and the moon, on my left, to force me to renounce my work, verily I would not desist therefrom until God made manifest His cause, or I perished in the attempt". Abu Talib was moved and exclaimed, "Go and say whatever you will: by God, I will never give you up to your enemies".

Migration to Abyssinia. Although the Holy Prophet was protected by his loyal uncle from the active hostility of the Quraysh the same was not true of all other Muslims, most of whom suffered cruely at the hands of the Quraysh. Touched by their unbearable sufferings, the Prophet advised them to migrate to the neighbouring Christian kingdom of Abyssinia, whose kind-hearted king called Negus or Najashi, would give them shelter, till the Merciful God would bring about a change in the hearts of thier persecutors and a path would open for them to return to Mecca.

On hearing the advice of the Prophet, fifteen Muslims, eleven men and four women, including the daughter of Holy Prophet, Ruqayya, and her husband, Uthman bin Affan, departed for Abyssinia in 615 A. D. and safely reached their destination. This was the first Migration to Abyssinia. But the Quraysh could not tolerate that their helpless victims should escape from their clutches so easily. They had old trade relations with the Abyssianian king and despatched a mission to his court with the request to extradite the refugees who had fled from the Law of Mecca. In order to find out the truth, Negus, the Abyssinian king, summoned the little Muslim band to appear in his court and explain the reasons of their fight from Meeca. Ja'far, son of Abu Talib, acting as spokesman for the fugitives, replied thus: "O king, we were plunged in the depth of ignorance and barbarism; we worshipped idols, practised immorality, ate dead bodies, and spoke abomination; we disregarded every feeling of humanity, and the duties of hospitality and neighbourhood; our law was the law of the strong and our government was the government of the tyrants. At last God raised among us a man, of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty and purity we know fully well; and he called us to the unity of God, and taught us not to associate anything with Him; he forbade us the worship of idols; and enjoined us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trust, to be merciful, and to regard the rights of neighbours.

He forebade us to speak evil of women, or take the property of the orphans. He ordered us to fly from vices, and to abstain from evil; to offer prayers, to render alms, to observe the fast. We have believed in him and accepted his teachings and his injunctions to worship God and not to associate anything with Him. For these reasons our people have risen against us, have persecuted us in order to make us forego the worship of God and return to the worship of idols of wood and stone and other abominations. They have tortured and injured us, until finding no safety among them, we have come to your country and hope you will protect us from their oppression."

So pleased was the Negus with this reply that he rejected the Quraysh demand to hand over the Muslim refugees to them and allowed them to dwell peacefully in his realm.

Encouraged by the successful migration and safe sojourn of the first party of migrants, a still larger party of 101 persons of whom 83 were men and the rest women and children, also left Mecca for Abyssinia during the year 616. This was the Second Migration to Abyssinia.

Intensification of Qurayshite Hostility. When the Quraysh saw that their helpless victims had succeeded in escaping from their clutches and had at last found a safe refuge far beyond their power, they were all the more alarmed and furious. They even feared that Muhammad (Sm) was even contemplating of inviting an Abyssinian invasion of Mecca on the model of earlier Abyssinian invasion of Abrahah in 570 A. D. They resolved, therefore, to intensify their persecution of the Holy Prophet. Their hatred was still more increased by the conversion of two of their most powerful members, namely, Hamza and Umar, who adopted Islam at this critical time in the fortunes of Islam.

Boycott of Banu Hashim and Shi'b Abu Talib (616-19). The Quraysh now determined to make a resolute effort to check the further growth of Islam. Knowing that the Holy Prophet was protected by the clan-loyalty of Banu Hashim, the heads of all other clans assembled in the Ka'ba and resolved to boycott Banu Hashim. All of them agreed not to inter-marry with the Hashimites and not to sell or trade with them. This agreement was duly written and deposited in the Ka'ba, so that none of them might dare to violate it.

Being thus excommunicated by the majority of the Meccans, the Hashimite clan, including the Prophet, retired to a narrow, rock-bound quarter in the outskirts of Mecca which was the property of Abu Talib, called Shi'b Abu Talib. Only one member

of Banu Hashim did not join his clan's incarceration in the prison-like rocky defile. He was Abu Lahab who threw his lot with the enemies of Islam and of his family. But all other Hashimites, both believers and non-believers, stood loyally by the Prophet and their aged chief, Abu Talib. For about three years, all social relations were cut off with them; neither food nor other necessaries of life were permitted by the implacable Quraysh to reach them. Soon was consumed whatever little they had brought to the Shi'b and they,—men, women and children, were reduced to conditions of starvation and dire need, relieved occasionally by a few morsels stealthily brought in by some kind-hearted friend or relative among the Quraysh. Only during the sacred months, when all enmity and hostility was suspended, were the imprisoned Hashimites able to come out and carry on human commerce with their countrymen. But even then the enemies of the Prophet did not give him peace. Whenever the Prophet addressed the message of Islam to the pilgrims assembled at Mecca or to the people assembled at the Ukaz fair, Abu Lahab, his uncle but his mortal enemy, would follow hard on his heels and would shout to the people: "Believe him not, he is a lying renegade! His only object is to draw you away from your gods and jinns, to his fancied revelations; wherefore follow him not, neither listen unto him". Seeing his own kinsman denouncing him, the people did not listen to the Holy Prophet. The result was that during the three years of Boycott the progress of Islam was halted in and around Mecca. Nevertheless some quiet seeds were sown in the hearts of some of the Arabs who listened to the Prophet at Mecca or Ukaz

The end of the Boycott. After about three years of excommunication, the hearts of some of the Qurayshites were touched by the harhships and sufferings they had caused to their own Hashimite relatives and kinsmen. Their hunger-stricken faces and the wailings of their starving children could be seen and heard by all the Meccans. At last the initiative to end the boycott was taken by some of the Quraysh leaders. They were Hisham bin Amr, Zubair bin Abi Umayyah of the Makhzum, al-Mutim bin Adi and others. When the Quraysh dignitaries assembled in the Ka'ba for the settlement of their city affairs, Zubair first pleaded that the ban of excommunication should be lifted. As many hearts had already mellowed by the sight of Hashimite sufferings, the appeal was readily accepted. An excuse was found to silence their superstitions conscience in a sign of God's approval. It was the rotting of the document of ban deposited in the Ka'ba. So the Quraysh let Banu Hashim out of their confinement with an easy mind.

The Year of Mourning. For the Prophet, however, the year of release turned out to be a year of grievous losses and of mourning. The boycott and incarceration told heavily on the health of the

aged members of Banu Hashim. First, Prophet's wife, Khadija, died. She was then about 63 years old. She had stood by the Prophet through thick and thin. Her death was deeply mourned by him. Though he married several other wives, but he always cherished loving and revered memories of his first wife, and used to say in his later life that when no body believed in his mission, Khadija believed in him, when he was friendless, she befriended him, and when he was helpless, she helped him. A few months later, Abu Talib also died. His death was a severe blow to the position of the Prophet at that critical juncture. His uncle, though he never accepted Islam, was a staunch and ever-loyal defender of the Holy Prophet. He had rallied the whole Banu Hashim to the defence of his nephew in his struggles with the Quraysh. His death was a signal for them to redouble their persecutions of him and of his followers.

Visit to Taif. Ten years had passed since he brought the Message of Islam to the Meccans, but they remained adamant and hostile to him. The loss of his dear ones, and the gloom in which he found in consequence of the Qurayshite hostility, made the Holy Prophet despair of them and diverted his eyes to other cities of Arabia, where he might succeed. With such thoughts he left with his loyal friend, Zaid, for Taif. But the Thaqifites of Taif were so much addicted to the worship of their goddess, al-Lat, that they turned upon the Holy Prophet with barbarous fury. He was driven out of the city by a rabble of slaves and hooligans, who hooted and hurled stones at him, wounding him in a cruel manner. The Prophet, however, prayed to God to show mercy to these people. He returned to Mecca, but then lived more or less a retired life. He did not preach the Message to the Meccans much. His missionary activities were now confied mostly to the Arabian tribes who assembled in Mecca at the time of the pilgrimage. It was on one such occasion, in the eleventh year of his mission, that the Prophet met a little party of six men from the northern city of Yathrib, which proved to be a turning point in the history of Islam.

The City of Yathrib: its Problems and Difficulties. The city of Yathrib, or Medina as it was later called, lay nearly 300 miles to the north of Mecca on the route to Syria. It was then inhabited by the Jews and the two Arab tribes of the Khazraj and the Aws, both of Himyarite or Yemani descent. The political, economic and religious situation in Yathrib inclined its inhabitants towards the new faith of Islam. The two Arab tribes were at loggarheads with each other. Disputes ending in murder and bloodshed were becoming too frequent among them. Hardly six years ago, in 616 A. D., they had fought a battle between them, known as the Battle of the Bu'ath. It ended in an uneasy peace because of the mutual

exhaustion of the two tribes without anyone of the two winning victory and control over the other. This was the political situation in Yathrib which caused, in its turn, insecurity and instability of life and property of its inhabitants. Now a warlike tension and insecurity of life and property are a normal condition in Bedouin or nomadic society. The mutual killings and plundering raids of the Bedouin Arabs do not cause much economic loss or destruction. They have few personal belongings and fewer economic needs. Their communal property, the pastures, the springs, etc., are indestructible; they cannot be destroyed, though they can change hands from one tribe to another. They are, however, the basic source of their life and sustenance. But the economic situation of settled communities, like that of Yathrib or Mecca, was quite different. What was endemic to nomadic life was fatal to them. Yathrib was a great oasis, inhabited by a community of farmers and cultivators. Fighting, killing and plundering in such a community caused an irreparable destruction. It destroyed not only the existing stock of agricualtural wealth, crops, animals, farmsteads, etc., but also destroyed those conditions of security of life and property in which alone these agrarian operations could be carried on. So the political situation of the tribal war and rivalry in Yathrib clashed with its economic situation of peaceful occupation and work, which required strong administration and government. The Yathribites were groping towards such a solution by electing someone among them as the chief or the ruler of the whole community. But their tribal jealousies obstructed a speedy solution. What they needed was a ruler who would be neutral in their inter-tribal quarrels, and in the Holy Prophet they found such a man. This proved to be the best solution of their politico-economic problems. The immediate reason which drew their attention to the preachings of the Holy Prophet in Mecca, were their fear of the Jewish domination. Yathrib was inhabited by three Jewish tribes, while several Jewish communities dwelt in the oases to the north of Yathrib. Quarrels between the Arabs and the Jews of Yathrib were also frequent. The Jews often threatened the Arabs that a Messiah would arise who would make the Jews strong and that they would then slay their enemies. Like all Arabs, the Yathribite Arabs were also idolators. When, in 620, a party of six Yathribite heathens who belonged to the Khazraj tribe came to the annual pilgrimage and heard the Holy Prophet preaching Islam, they said to one another, "Know surely that this is the Prophet, of whom the Jews have warned us; come let us now make haste and be the first to join him." They came to the Prophet and accepted Islam and said to him, "Our countrymen have long been engaged in a most bitter and deadly feud with one another, but perhaps now God will unite them together through you and your teaching. Therefore we will preach to them and make known to them this religion, that we have received from

you." So they returned to their city full of faith and hope.

The First Pledge of al-Aqabah : Pledge of Women. When next year the time of pilgrimage came the six men along with five more, came to Mecca and secretly met the Holy Prophet. Among these five newcomers, two were from the rival Aws tribe. They also listened to the teachings of Islam from the Holy Prophet and became Muslims. All of them took pledge to obey the Prophet in these words, "We will not worship any god but the one God; we will not steal, neither will we commit adultery or kill our children. We will abstain from calumny and slander. We will obey the Prophet in every thing that is right". This was the first Pledge of al-Aqabah, also called the Pledge of Women, because it did not enjoin fighting in the defence of Islam and was usually administered to women by the Prophet. They were now to spread Islam in their city. The Prophet instructed them to spread Islam in Yathrib and send Mus'ab bin Umair with them to assist in the missionary task. Their mission was a great success, and Islam spread from clan to clan and house to house in their city. In the meanwhile, the Holy Prophet anxiously awaited the coming of the next pilgrimage.

The Second Pledge of al-Aqabah : The Pledge of War. When in 622, the time of the Pilgrimage came, a still larger party of the Yathribite Muslims, 75 strong which consisted of 73 men and two women, accompanied the heathenic pligrims to Mecca who were not aware of the mission of their Muslim fellow travellers. They were commissioned to invite the Holy Prophet to take refuge in Yathrib from the fury of his Meccan enemies. They met the Prophet at the same secret place, al-Aqabah, so as to conceal their conference with the Prophet. He brought his uncle, al-Abbas, to the meeting. Al-Abbas was not yet a Muslim, but he was sympathetic to the cause of Islam and was, therefore, taken into confidence by the Prophet. He opened the conference and clearly pointed out the risk the Yathribites incurred by adopting Islam and inviting the Prophet to their city. They replied with one voice that they had adopted Islam with full knowledge of the dangers that surrounded them, and were ready to pledge themselves to the protection of the Prophet's life and Islam. Thereupon the Holy Prophet, after reciting some Quranic verses, repeated the earlier pledge and called upon them to obey him and to fight for him and his. At this the leader of the Yathribites, Bara bin Ma'rar, took the Prophet's hand in his and said, "By Him who sent thee as His Prophet, and through thee revealed unto us His truth, we will protect thee as we would our own bodies, and we swear allegiance to thee as our leader. We are the sons of battle and men of mail,

which he have inherited as worthy sons of worthy forefathers". So they all in turn, taking his hand in theirs, took the second Pledge of Aqabah, or the Pledge of War, to the Holy Prophet. Then the meeting ended. The Yathribites returned to their tents and thence to their city; the Prophet returned to his house with the plan to leave his birthplace for good.

The Hijrah or Emigration to Medina. In the tribalistic society of ancient Arabia it was not easy for a man to shift his residence from one city or tribe to another; he could be killed by any man during the interval he transferred his allegiance from his tribe to the other. This danger faced the Muslims of Mecca when they also migrated from their native city to Yathrib or Medina, as it should now be called, as they were asked to go there by the Holy Prophet. Nevertheless, they left Mecca in parties of twos and threes after the Second Pledge of Aqabah till only the Holy Prophet, Abu Bakar, Ali and their families were left behind. In all nearly a hundred families migrated to Medina and thus came to be known as the Muhajrin or the Emigrants. The Quraysh had already got the intelligence of the Prophet's meeting with the Yathribites. But when they saw the houses and even the whole quarters of the Muslims deserted by their dwellers, their suspicions were confirmed and their apprehensions aroused. Their leaders met in the conncil hall, the Dar-un-Nadwa, in the Ka'ba.

Prophet's Departure. In the meeting, one of the Quraysh leaders suggested that the Prophet should be expelled from Mecca; another suggested that he should be imprisoned for life, but Abu Jahl proposed that he should be killed. In order to distribute the blood-guilt over all the Qurayshite clans, he proposed further that a young man from each of the clans must be included in the band of murderers. This suggestion was readily accepted and the gang of assasins left for the house of the Holy Prophet, headed by Abu Jahl. The Prophet who had anticipated such a move from the Quraysh, was promptly informed of their evil design. After giving final instructions to Ali, he left his house along with Abu Bakr and went to the south of Mecca. They hid themselves in a cave in the Mount Thaur. Abu Jahl's gang posted itself at the door of Prophet's house with the intention of killing him in the early hours of the morning when he would come out for prayers. They now and then peeped in, to assure themselves that he was lying in his bed, where Ali had laid himself in the Prophet's place. In the morning, when the Quraysh found out their mistake, they at once despatched mounted men in all directions to apprehend the Prophet dead or alive. For three days they vigorously searched for the Prophet and his companion, but at last they despaired of it and

slackened their efforts. When informed of it, the Holy Prophet and Abu Bakr departed to Medina on two camels. By forced marches, they covered the distance between the two cities in half the usual time, and reached the village of Quba, four miles to the south of Medina, on 22nd September, 622. After staying there for two weeks, the Holy Prophet entered Medina on Friday. This was the Hijrah, which opened a new chapter in the history of Islam.

Importance of the Hijrah. Hijrah or the Emigration from Mecca is the greatest event in the history of Islam. It was such an important event in the life of the Prophet that it can be regarded as a turning point in his life and a starting point of both the Islamic History and of the Islamic calendar. It saved Islam. Before the Hijrah, Islam was a religion of a persecuted minority in Mecca. For thirteen long years the Prophet had endevoured to convert the idolatrous Quraysh to his faith by means of peaceful preaching. But only a hundred Meccan families, nearly 300 persons, accepted his message. During the last three years of his mission, the progress of Islam had practically come to a standstill. The prospects of Islam's success in Mecca were, therefore, dim, if not altogether dark. Had there no Hijrah or migration to Medina, Islam would have become one of the little known sects among the pagans of Mecca. Such are the negative implications of the Hijrah.

The positive results of the Hijrah are more important and momentous both in the history of Islam and of the world. The Hijrah made Islam as we know it to-day. It made Islam both a social order and a state. Although the basic features and principles of Islam such as the belief in God, the Last Day, Paradise, etc., were revealed in Mecca, but it became organised religion only after the Emigration to Medina. Another significant change was in the method by which the Holy Prophet sought to spread Islam. The Hijrah brought about a change in his methods and activities. In Mecca Islam was and would have remained a religion persecuted by the dominant paganism, but in Medina it became both a religion and a state. Really Medina became a religio-political community or a theocratic republic of Islam, with the Holy Prophet as as its President or the Chief. From this followed still another result. It was the nationalistion of tribal Arabia. The Islamic Republic of Medina became a centre around which all the tribes of Arabia were united into a nation under the hegemony of Medina and on the basis of Islam. Faith replaced kinship and achieved a unity which was never attempted before in Arabia. As a matter of fact, kinship relations of tribes could not unite a group wider than a clan or a tribe. It was only the religious relationship of a new faith that

could unite all the warring tribes of Arabia into a single nation and state. This achievement was also possible after the Hijrah.

The Hijrah also demonstrated or revealed the moral worth, the strength of faith and loyalty of the early converts of Islam who migrated to Medina. For them 'Hijrah' was not a migration as we might understand this term in the conditions of modern life, much less a 'fight' as the European Christian writers often understand it to be, but was the breaking of old ties and a beginning of new trials and efforts. At that time it was an ordeal, a leap in the dark and a risk undertaken for the sake of their new religion, and a demonstration that they were resolved to preserve it in face of all trials and tribulations even to the extent of a voluntary exile to foreign lands and peoples. And all of them came out of this trial with flying colours, as we shall see. Neither impoverishment, and starvation, nor war could deflect them an inch from their path they had chosen to preserve their faith. The Holy Prophet also demonstrated that he was not only the great Teacher but also one of the greatest statesmen and a practical leader of men both in war and in peace.

CHAPTER 4

FOUNDATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MEDINA

With the Hijrah opened a new era in the history of Islam, an era of consolidation and expansion of Islam as a religion, society and state. Its evolution began during the first two years of the Great Migration, when the old tribal community of Yathrib was transformed by the Prophet into a religio-political community of Islam. Before we describe the changes which brought about this transformation, this Islamic revolution, let us first see what the city of Yathrib was like before the Holy Prophet and the Muslims migrated to it and what was the political situation in Medina immediately after their arrival.

The Jews and Arabs of Yathrib. The city of Yathrib, as Medina was called before the advent of Muhammad (Sm), was an oasis in the north-western part of the Hijaz, lying nearly a hundred miles east of the Red Sea coast and nearly three hundred miles to the north of Mecca. At first inhabited by the Amelikite Arabs, it came to be inhabited by the Jews who were driven out of Palestine by the persecutions of the ancient rulers of Babylonia, Greece and Rome. These fugitive Jews founded colonies in the fertile oases of the Hijaz, such as at Yathrib itself, and at Khaibar, Fadak and other places in north-western Arabia. They won but a few Arab tribes to their faith, partly because of their racial pride and partly due to the exclusiveness of their faith. The Jews were agriculturists, artisans and craftsmen. In Yathrib, they were represented by three tribes, namely, Bani Nazir, Bani Qurayza and Bani Qaynuqa. At first the Jews outnumbered the Arabs and dominated them. But in the fourth century A. D. two Himyarite or Yemani tribes, the Aus and the Khazraj, come and settled in Yathrib. Like all Arab tribes, they too were idolators. As they grew in numbers, they ousted the Jews from the dominant position, and seized lands from them. Ultimately the Jews were reduced to a subordinate role in the city. But owing to their superior religious unity and culture, they still held the Arab tribes in fear of them. They often threatened that a prophet would arise among them who would slay all non-Jewish tribes in the country. It was this fear of the Jewish prophet that prompted many Yathribite Arabs to welcome the Prophet of Islam to their city.

Among the Arab tribes themselves there was no unity or peace. After the capture of lands from the Jews, quarrels and struggles among the clans of the Aus and the Khazraj increased constantly.

At the end of the sixth century, they became more frequent. Really speaking, their tribal organisation could not produce a more comprehensive unity among them than that of a clan or tribe. The result was that the original two tribes now came to be divided into nearly twenty clans, each ready to fight with the other, and seize the lands and farmsteads of the vanquished party. At the time when Islam rose in Mecca, the inter-tribal struggles in Yathrib became more acute and bloody. The whole city was divided into two parties of the Aus and the Khazraj, supported by the Jews and other Arab tribes. The Jewish tribes of Bani Nazir, and Bani Qurayza sided with the Aus, while the Qaynuqa sided with the Khazraj. In 616, a battle was fought between the two, known as the Battle of the Bu'ath. The Khazraj, though numerous, were defeated and their date groves were burnt down by the victors. Still the Aus tribe could not establish its supremacy in the city. The struggle continued as ever, but took the form of individual murders and nocturnal attacks. The unending discord caused much destruction and dismay in the city. It ruined its agrarian economy and inflicted irreparable injury to its prosperity. In order to put an end to their troubles, both parties were almost ready to choose Abdullah bin Obay, one of the leaders of the Khazraj, as the chief or king of their city. But before this plan had materialised, the Holy Prophet migrated to Medina on the invitation of a majority of the Yathribites. They preferred a stranger as their ruler rather than one of their compatriots, who, they feared, would not be neutral and impartial in their inter-tribal quarrels. It was yet another reason which made the Yathribites to welcome the Holy Prophet to their city. However the discomfiture of Abdullah bin Obay on the point of near-success made him a lifelong enemy of the Holy Prophet and Islam, whom he blamed as the cause of his failure to be crowned as a king of Yathrib.

Political Parties in Medina after the Hijrah. Immediately after the Hijrah, the citizens of Medina were divided into four political parties or groups, two in favour of Islam and other two openly or surreptitiously opposed to it. The first two were the Muhajireen of Mecca and the Ansars of Medina, the old and the new converts ; and the last two were the Jews and the party of Abdallah bin Obay which was dubbed by the Quran as the party of the Munafiqeen or the Disaffected or Hypocrites. The Muhajireen or the Immigrants from Mecca were the Quraysh or fellow-tribesmen of the Holy Prophet. They were nearly 150 men in all. The Ansars, or the 'Helpers' were those inhabitants of Medina who had accepted Islam and were ready to assist their new faith with their properties and lives.

The Brotherhood. Soon after the Hijrah, the Holy Prophet cemented the bonds of love and assistance between the Muhajireen

and the Ansars by establishing a new bond of brotherhood between the two. The Meccan Muhajireen had arrived in Medina in a condition of great penury and helplessness. They had abandoned their all in Mecca—their houses, properties and riches, for the sake of their faith and many of them were in a state of great distress and want. The Ansars or the Medinian Muslims were, however, in a position to help them. The Prophet, therefore, established a brotherhood between the two parties, a brotherhood based not on kinship or blood but in faith, which linked them together in sorrow and in happiness. In this way an Ansar became a 'brother' of a Muhajir and had to share his wealth and property with his new "brother-in-faith". There were many touching scenes of this new fraternity. However many of the Muhajireen refused to submit to their straintened circumstances. They soon took to trade and business and made wealth in a short time, thus becoming independent of their hospitable brethren-in-faith. After the Battle of Badr, when the zakat and war-booty brought increasing riches to the Muslims, the League of Brotherhood was also abrogated as no longer necessary.

The Charter of Medina. After estrblishing fraternal relations between the local and Qurayshite Muslims and alleviating the financial distress of the Muhajireen, Muhammad (Sm) next turned his attention to the problems of relations between the Jews and the Muslims, the restoration of peace and order in Medina, torn by a century of strife and bloodshed, and the organisation of the city as a community of believers. Abdullah bin Obay and his Munafiqeen had not yet become a problem and a danger, because Islam was so popular in Medina and was spreading so fast in it that they dared not oppose the Prophet or the spread of his religion openly. The Prophet also adopted a conciliatory attitude towards Abdullah bin Obay. It was only when the Qurayshite invaders and aggressors began to hover around Medina that the Munafiqeen, who became the hirelings and tools of the Quraysh, became a danger to the security of Medinese republic and to Islam.

Medina was inhabited by two races, the Arabs and the Jews. When, after the Hijrah, a great majority of the Arabs of Medina adopted Islam, it came to be inhabited by two religious communities. Religious, social and political relations of peace and of friendship and freedom had to be established between the two. Moreover, century or so of bloodshed and discord, war and murder which prevailed between the clans of the two rival tribes of the Aus and the Khazraj had to be put to a close and Medina was to be organised on the basis of sound administration and government. The Charter of Medina, which the Holy Prophet granted to the Jews and various clans of Medina, solved these problems and achieved the purpose of establishing the republic of Medina. We

shall here briefly describe the main provisions of this Charter, and shall then discuss its effects and importance.

The Charter or the Covenant of Medina is a lengthy document. For our convenience, we have divided and arranged its provisions under the three headings, political, civic and religious, and have further subdivided each of them into various subheadings.

The Charter : *Its Preamble.* "From the Apostle of God, for those of Quraysh and the inhabitant of Medina who accept Islam and adopt the Faith; and for those who are subservient to them in war and alliances."

Its Political Clauses :—

1. *Republic and 'Nation' of Medina.* "They (*i.e.* the Muslims and the Jews) constitute one political 'Ummah' or entity against the whole mankind."

2. *The Peace of the Republic.* "The valley of Yathrib (Medina) will be taken for a Sanctuary (*i.e.*, a place of peace) by all its citizens," Muslims or Jews.

3. *Sovereignty of Allah and the Presidency of the Prophet.* (*i*) In case a difference arose between the citizens, they should turn for guidance to God and His Prophet. (*ii*) If there takes place any dispute or murder amongst the people of Medina, and further mischief is feared, then guidance will be sought from God or His Prophet, Muhammad (Sm). God's will is with that person who obeys the injunctions and decisions with the best of intentions and fidelity. (*iii*) No one in Medina, Muslim or Jew, would declare war or proceed on a military campaign save only with the permission of Muhammad (Sm). (*iv*) Controversies and disputes shall be referred to the decision of God and His Prophet.

4. *Duties and Obligations of War and Peace.* (*i*) War and peace shall be made in common. He that goes forth shall be secure ; and he that sits at home shall be secure. (*ii*) While fighting in the way of God, no Believer would make peace with the enemy leaving aside his fellow Muslims, as long as peace is not unanimously resolved upon. (*iii*) The Believers would be one Community and act in a body while making peace. They will unanimously wreak vengeance on anyone who fights against them in the path of God. (*iv*) The Jews and the Muslims will mutually help each other if somebody contemplates an invasion of Medina. (*v*) In case the Jews have to fight side by side with the Muslims on the battlefield, they will shoulder the expenditure along with the Muslims. (*vi*) If the Muslims are invited to make peace, the

Jews shall also accept the same terms and stick to them. And if the Jews invite the Muslims for a similar purpose, it will be incumbent on the Muslims to behave similarly. The only exception will be in the case of a religious war.

5. *Prohibition of civil strife.* If anyone fights with the people of this Covenant, he will be jointly resisted by them, that is, by the Muslims and the Jews. There shall be mutual love and concord amongst them. There shall be fidelty and not faithlessness among them.

6. *Political duties of the non-Muslims.* None of the non-Muslims may offer refuge to the life and property of the Quraysh of Mecca, nor cross the path of a Believer in this respect.

Its Civic Clauses :—

1. *Responsibility for peace and Blood-money.* The Qurayshite Emigrants and the people of the Banu Aus and Banu Khazraj will be responsible for their own wards. They will pay blood-money on a co-operative basis and they will ransom their prisoners out of their own pockets, so that relations between them and the Believers of other tribes, clans or parties may be based on justice and equity.

2. *Duties regarding debt and contract.* The Believers are to make a point of going to the rescue of anyone who has fallen badly into debt so that relations between such a person and the Believers may be based on justice and equity. No Believer will enter into direct relations with any person who has already entered into contract with another Believer.

3. *Duties regarding the breach of peace and other offences.* The pious Believers will unanimouly rise against anyone who rebels, or who commits fornication, or any offence or tyranny or who attempts to stir up mischief amongst them. They are to make common cause against such a person, even though he be their son.

4. *Duties of Believers.* No Believer will assassinate a Believer on behalf of an infidel, nor is he to render help to a non-Believer against a Believer.

5. *Murderer and his punishment.* Whosoever kills a Believer, intentionally and deliberately, and has his crime established against him shall be subjected to retaliation, unless the guardian of the assassinated person agrees to accept blood-money. None of the Believers will offer to harbour any murderer or abet him in any way. Whosoever does so will bring down on himself the wrath and curse of God. No penalty or indemnity would be accepted of him.

The Jews who have also agreed to this Covenant are under the same obligations.

6. *Right of retaliation or self-defence.* No obstacles or impediments would be placed in the way of a person who has received a bruise or minor injury, should he wish to retaliate.

7. *Responsibility for murder.* Whosoever causes blood-shed shall be held responsible himself and his tribe with him, otherwise it would be an act of tyranny. God's will is with those who obey the injunction of this mandate scrupulously.

Its Religious Clauses :

1. *Mutual responsibility and brotherhood of Muslims.* The responsibility of a Believer of God, because it is God's kingdom, is such that should even the lowest amongst the Believers offer refuge to somebody, then every Believer would be under an obligation to defend and respect him. The Believers are brothers and constitute one unit against the whole world. If a Jew becomes a Muslim, he will be treated as our equal. He would not be tyrannised and no help would be offered to anybody against him.

2. *Political alliance with the Jews.* The Jews are recognised as being in a political alliance with the Muslims and are one with them.

3. *Freedom of Worship and the Principle of Tolerance.* Whether it is the Judaism of the Jews or the Faith of the Muslims, both Jews and Muslims are to offer reciprocal respect and tolerance for the two religions. Whosoever is responsible for any aggression or for the breach of any treaty, will make himself and his household responsible for necessary punishment, whether he be a Muslim or a Jew.

Such are, in brief, the salient features of the Chapter or the Covenant of Medina which the Holy Prophet promulgated soon after his arrival in Medina.

Its effects. A perusal of the Charter would clearly indicate that it aimed at and brought about a complete transformation in the political, religious and civic life of Medina. Firstly, it established political unity and transformed the city of warring tribes into a peaceful State or republic, headed by the Holy Prophet, under the sovereignty of Allah. Secondly, it replaced civil strife and discord by peace and order under a new code of civic laws which the Prophet promulgated. The life and property of every person, Muslim or Jew, were protected by the Prophet and

Islam. The Charter guaranteed equality of rights and duties to all the citizens of Media, irrespective of their colour, creed or social status. Thus a rule of law was proclaimed where there was before a rule of tribal vengeance and inequality. A murder would not go now unpunished because the party of the murdered was weak or undefended. Thirdly, it proclaimed the principles of religious freedom and tolerance.

Its Significance. The Charter of Medina has been called the Magna Carta of early Islam. It proclaimed the principles of civic equality, the rule of law, freedom of worship and religious tolerance. But it was more than that; it was the Manifesto of the Prophet, outlining his plan or program for rebuilding the strife-torn Medina. It also outlined the blue-print of a similar plan for unifying the war-torn land of Arabia.

1. **Plan of Prophet.** A study of the Charter clearly shows that the Prophet aimed at building such a Rebublic at Medina of which the Muslims and the Jews would be equal citizens. At that time, nearly half the population of Medina was Jewish. They were landlords, merchants and shopkeepers, and possessed great wealth and riches. They had also fortified houses, castles and colonies in and around Medina, Yet they could not be allowed to form a state within a state, hostile to the Muslim State, but to be incorporated as equal citizens and partners in a single state of Medina. This was the ultimate goal and ideal of this Charter, embodied in this provision: "You form one community or Ummah as against mankind." It indicates the statemanship of the Holy Prophet of the highest order and of his farseeing vision. If he failed to build such an empire in Arabia, comprising several races and religions, it was solely due to the perfidy and treachery of the Jews who joined hands with the Qurayshite aggressors against him and his Republic.

2, **A new social order.** Another significant change which the Charter aimed at was a new social order in place of the old tribal kinship. The new community was to be organised on allegiance to the new religion and the sovereignty of God. Hitherto the greatest social unit in ancient Arabia was the clan or the tribe, with kinship or blood-relationship as its social bond and political boundary. But such a tribal organisation was a source of weakness and wars in the country. It was unable to preserve peace outside the boundaries of the tribe or the clan as the case may be; and even within the tribe it failed to keep peace when it increased in numbers or was split up by some powerful motive such as economic gain, etc. Hence wars and disputes between the clan and clan and tribe and tribe were so common in Arabia. The Charter of Medina, however, substituted a new and stronger bond of allegiance to Islam, loyalty

to the Prophet and the sovereignty of God in place of the limited and weak bond of tribal membership. It unified several tribes of Medina and aimed at unifying all the tribes of Arabia, as we shall see, and thus brought an Arab nation into existence. Thus social and political brotherhood of Islam took precedence over all other ties and relationships of blood and tribe. It bound all Muslims together for offence and defence; it guaranteed them the protection of the Community, except when a man was an obvious offender. It made God and His Prophet the final arbiters in all disputes. Though the tribe still remained the basis of social relationships, it was super-imposed by a new bond of religious community. In this the Charter brought about a socio-political revolution in the history of Arabia. The basic principle of this revolution was the headship of the Prophet under the sovereignty of God.

We are now anticipating events, because the unification of Arabia under the leadership of the Prophet was the product of the wars with the Quraysh of Mecca. We shall therefore turn our attention from the internal affairs of the newly-founded Republic of Medina to its foreign affairs and dangers.

CHAPTER 5

WARS WITH THE QURAYSH OF MECCA

(624 A. D. to 628 A. D.)

General situation in Hijaz after the Hijrah.

The Quraysh of Mecca had neither forgotten nor forgiven their fugitive relatives in Medina. Hardly the first year ot the Hijrah was out when war-clouds in the form of raiding parties of the Quraysh began to hover around Medina. In the meanwhile, the Prophet had also settled the internal affairs of the city and was ready to devote his attention to the machinations of his inveterate enemies of Mecca. When the Quraysh saw the Prophet and Islam prospering in Medina, their undying hostility and hatred for them both took more and more aggressive form till war between the Quraysh and the Muslims became inevitable. The raids developed into battles. The first of these battles was fought at Badr, hardly two years after the Hijrah.

The Battle of Badr. January, 624 A. D.

Its Causes.

1. **Threat to Mecca commerce.** War between the Quraysh and the Muslims lay in the logic of the commercial geography of North Arabia. For about two centuries the Qurayshi merchants had been traversing the highlands of the Hijaz to trade with the neighbouring countries of Iraq, Syria and Egypt, and Abyssinia. The trade-route to these countries passed through Medina or its neighbourhood. The trade of Mecca was large and profitable. Every year in spring, caravans laden with the merchandise of South Arabia and South Asia, used to leave Mecca for Syria and Iraq. They carried leather, gums, frankincense, the precious metals, and other products of Arabia. In exchange, the Quraysh merchants brought from Syria such goods as the cloth, silk, articles of luxury and especially bullion, because the Byzantines had little to offer the Arabs in exchange for what they brought to their markets. Some of these caravans were very large and very rich. Often they consisted of more than a thousand camels, carrying goods to the value of 20,000 dinars and more. The caravan which Abu Sufyan was leading and which became the immediate cause of the Battte of Badr was the biggest so far, consisting of 2000 camels, carrying goods worth 50,000 dinars, (A dinar was a gold coin equal to Rs. 40 in present-

day Pakistani currency) much of which was in bullion form. It is calculated that the annual export trade af Mecca was then not less than 250,000 dinars. It fetched the Quraysh at least 50% profit due to their monopolistic practices. While the big merchants invested huge sums in these expeditions, an ordinary member of the Quraysh tribe would invest his or her little bit of share in them. Thus the whole city was devoted to this caravan trade. The merchant who had the biggest share was usually made its leader. He commanded the guard of horsemen and camel riders who protected the long caravan on the road, negotiated with the chiefs of the nomadic tribes for safe conduct through their territories and arranged all other matters connected with its safety on the road and the sale of the precious load. The departure and the arrival of a caravan were occasions of great excitement, discussion and jubilation among the citizens of Mecca. To ensure safety of the route the Quraysh leaders had since long established friendly relations and treaty alliances with the Bedouin tribes who dwelt across or near their trade-routes.

Upto the day of the Hijrah, this great and far-flung network of the Meccan commercial system worked smoothly and efficiently. The migration of the Prophet and his Muslims was even a matter of relief and joy to the pagan Quraysh. They thought that they had a good riddance and had cut off their renegade sons, brothers and relatives even without the proverbial penny. They tried to forget them and devote themselves heart and soul to their noisy discussions about their shares in and the arrangements for the departure of the next caravan. But when the next spring came, the time for the departure of the Syrian caravan, they realised for the first time the folly of driving the Muslims to the strategic city of Medina. With growing apprehension and even consternation, they heard about the successes of Islam in Medina, the increasiag number of the Muslims and their growing prosperity. They felt that Islam in Medina was a thorn in their side. But their hatred for it was so great that they never thought of peaceful and good-neighbourly relations with the Muslims. The only solution they found for their difficulty was to give up the route that went though Medina and adopt the more westernly route along the coast of the Red Sea, from Badr to Ayala on the gulf of Aqaba. This convinced the Holy Prophet that the undying hatred and hostility of the Quraysh would never be appeased by his exile and migration. He had, therefore, to adopt counter-measures against them. The first of these measures was to deny all trade out-lets to the Quraysh on which their prosperity and aggressive spirit depended.

2. Qurayshite intrigues in Medina. The Quraysh of Mecca were greatly displeased with the people of Medina for giving shelter to the Prophet and the Muslims. When they saw them prospering,

their irritation and anger knew no b ounds. As usual, they resorted to intrigues. They knew that some of the Yathribite citizens of Medina paid only lip-service to Islam but were at heart disaffected towards it. These hypocriticial persons were led by Abdullah bin Obay whose high hopes of sovereignty of Medina were dashed to pieces by the advent of Islam into his city. The Quraysh knew about his disappointment and disaffection towards Islam. They wrote to him a letter threatening reprisals if he would not drive out the Holy Prophet from Medina. He called a meeting of his fellow-citizens and informed them of the Qurayshite threat to attack Medina if they did not expel the Prophet and the Muhajireen from their city. His influence was still great over the citizens and they were ready to follow him. When the Holy Prophet came to know of the meeting, he hurried to it. He dissuaded them from any thought of revolt against him and Islam as it would entail bloodshed and disunity among the citizen themselves as many of them were staunch Muslims and would fight with their own relatives. The people at once accepted Prophet's pleading and gave up all thought of revolt. Thus the Prophet nipped Abdullah bin Obay's conspiracy and sedition in the bud. Yet it showed him that the Quraysh would not give him peace even in Medina.

3. Economic warfare and strategic alliances of the Prophet. Having been convinced of the Qurasyhite hostility and conspiracies, the Prophet decided to take measures for the security and defence of the Republic of Medina. Being essentially a man of peace, he did not like to cause hostilities and bloodshed without first trying more peaceful methods of securing the submission of his inveterate enemies. Being himself a merchant in the past, he understood well that the caravan trade of the Quraysh was a vulnerable point in their armour. He therefore, devised a method of economic warfare and alliances with the Bedouin tribes who inhabited across the trade-routes of the Qurashite caravans. With these purposes, he led serval expeditions against the Quraysh caravans when they began to move out after the spring of 623 A. D. At first these expeditions consisted only of the Muhajireen, but later the Ansars of Medina also began to join them. They never led to bloodshed which the Prophet had strictly prophibited; the aim was only to haras and frighten the Quraysh merchants and traders from trading activities. They were commanded by a leader appointed by the Prophet, such as his uncle, Hamza, or Ali or by Sa'd bin Waqqas. A year after the Hijrah, the Prophet himself led three expeditions in the pursuit of the Quraysh caravans. The first of these expeditions, sent in June, 623, went as far as Al-Abwa, half-way between Medina and Mecca. The Quraysh caravan escaped punishment. But the Holy Prophet utilised the occasion to enter into a friendly alliance with the local Bedouin tribe, who was hitherto friendly towards the Quraysh. His second expedition, in July 623, was

against another caravan, led by Omayya bin Khalaf, one of the richest and most influential Quraysh leaders. His caravan included 2500 camels. But it eluded the pursuit. The third expedition took place in October, 623, when Abu Safyan was leading a caravan to Syria. But he too escaped unpunished. However, it was this caravan which on its return journey became the *casus belli* of the Battle of Badr. The Prophet utilised this occasion also of entering into a treaty alliance with the Bedouin tribes who dwelt between Yenbo on the Red Sea coast and Badr and Osheira. The aim of these treaty alliances who was to deny even the westerly coastal route to the arrogant Quraysh traders. After making alliances with the tribes of the northern Hijaz, such as the Juhaina, etc., the Prophet resolved to cut off the southern route as well. With this intention, he sent a small party to the south of Mecca, which led to the incident of Nakhla, as we shall relate below. Thus within a short period of a year and a half, the Prophet had shown that the Muslims of Medina were not the despised fugitives as the Qurayshite pagans had believed but a power to fear and respect. The arrogant Quraysh leaders, led by Abu Jahl, were however, bent upon aggression and war, as the events related below show us.

4. Events which led to Battle of Badr.

(*i*) **Kurz bin Jabir's raid.** Kurz bin Jabir al-Fahri was a Bedouin chief, in the pay of the Quraysh. In July, 623, they sent him to raid Medina. He came as near the city as he could and carried off some of the camels and cattle of the Muslims which were feeding in a plain a few miles from the city. The Prophet pursued him to Badr, but he made good his escape. This was the first act of war on the part of the Quraysh, a declaration of war on Medina. If the Holy Prophet had taken it lying down, the emboldened Quraysh would have followed it by still greater acts of war. But he decided to pay them in their own coin, by a counter-raid, this time against their caravans to the south of Mecca. As a matter of fact, if the Qurayshites had given the Holy Prophet half a chance to spread his religion peacefully, the idea of war would not have come to him. But as they did not—neither in his native city of Mecca nor in Medina, the city of his refuge—war with them was inevitable for the survival of Islam, the security of the Republic of Medina and for the very lives and honour of the Muslims of Medina, surrounded as they were by implacable enemies abroad and hidden foes at home.

(*ii*) **Incident of Nakhla.** Having completed his treaty alliances with the Bedouin tribes in north of Mecca, the Holy Prophet resolved to extend the sphere of his economic warfare to the south of Mecca. With this intention and also Kurz bin Jabir's raid, he sent a reconnaisance party of nearly eight persons to the south

under the command of Abdullah ibn Jahsh to keep and eye on the movements of the Qurayshite activities to the south of Mecca. The time was the holy month of Rajab (November, 623), one of the four months when fighting and raiding was forbidden by the pagan customs of the Arabs. The party reached Nakhla, lying between Mecca and Taif, one of the halting places of the caravans going to or from Mecca and the South. There Ibn Jahsh and his companions came across a Qurayshite caravan, laden with the produce of Taif and led by Amr bin Hazrami, one of the Quraysh leaders. They raided the caravan and in the scuffle, Amr bin Hazrami was killed and his two companions were captured, while his fourth campanion escaped to Mecca. When Abdullah bin Jahsh returned to Medina with the booty and the prisoners, the Prophet was displeased with him for fighting the forbidden month. The incident of Nakhla, however, aggravated the tension between the Quraysh and the Muslims. The Quraysh of Mecca were now brimful for war. The excuse for it came within a month.

(*iii*) **Revelations for Jihad**. As events were now fast moving towards a clash of arms between the Quraysh and the Muslims, the Prophet received divine revelations calling upon the Believers to wage a Holy War against them : "Permission is given to those who fight because they have been wronged, who have been driven from their homes undeservedly, only for that they said, 'Our Lord is God." "Kill them wherever ye find them, and drive them out from whence they drive you out." "Fight them that there be no sedition and that the religion may be God's." Referring specifically to the incident of Nakhla, another revelation said : "They will ask thee concerning war in the sacred month. Say, the war therein is bad, but to turn aside from the cause of God and to have no faith in Him and the sacred temple, and to disown its people is worse in the sight of God. Fight in the way of God with them that fight against you; but trangress not, for God loveth not the trangressors. Kill them wheresoever ye find them ; and expel them from whence they have expelled you ; for temptation to idolatry is more grievous than killing." The fighting Muslims were assured that if they won, the world be theirs, and those who died in the Holy War the Paradise, the next world, would be theirs.

(*iv*) **Interception of Abu Sufyan's caravans**. The immediate cause of Battle of Badr was the interception of the caravan of Abu Sufyan. After staying in Syria for a couple of months, he was returning to Mecca in the month of December, 623. The Prophet had already posted two men on the caravan-route near Badr. But Abu Sufyan was informed in time by some 'disaffected' citizen in Medina. So he diverted his caravan to some unfrequented paths along the Red Sea coast. At the same time he sent a messenger post haste to Mecca for a rescue party. When the messenger

reached Mecca, he raised a loud cry for help which literally shook the whole city. Almost everybody in Mecca had invested a share in this caravan, which was one of the biggest even sent by the Meccans. The Quraysh leaders, led by Abu Jahl, at once raised an army of one thousand not only to save their rich caravan but also to teach a lesson to Muhammad (Sm) for daring to obstruct their commercial passage. A couple of days after the departure of the army from Mecca, Abu Sufyan reached with his caravan safely in the city. He wrote to the commanders to return to Mecca, as the purpose for which they had marched out had been fulfilled. The Quraysh chiefs warmly debated among themselves whether to return or the press forward for a war with the Muslims. Some of them, especially Utba bin Rabia, were in favour of returning home and were against shedding the blood of the their relatives amongst the Muslims. But Abu Jahl, whose enmity towards the Prophet and Islam was unquenchable, pressed for going forth to Badr in order to convince all Arabia that the Quraysh would not let go the threat to their caravan-trade unchallenged. His opinion carried the day and the Quraysh army advanced forth. It encamped in the sandy plain Badr, nearly sixty miles from Medina, on the caravan-route to Syria.

Muslims leaves Medina for Badr. When the news of the Quraysh army's departure from Mecca reached Medina, the Holy Prophet asked his followers what to do. The Muhajireen were ready for war to a man. He then asked the Ansars specifically, because according to the Pledge of Aqabah they were not bound to fight for the Holy Prophet outside Medina. But Sa'd bin Muadh, on their behalf, also responded with alacrity to the call to defend the Prophet and Islam, and to follow him wherever he liked to lead them. When the little army, the first army, of Islam, left Medina, it consisted of about 313 men; among whom 83 were Muhajireen, nearly 60 were from the Bani Aus, and the rest from the Khazraj. When the Muslim army reached in the plain of Badr, it took possession of the water, which proved to be a great help in winning victory ever its enemy.

It was Thursday evening in January, 624, when the Holy Prophet and his army reached the valley of Badr. The scouts soon brought the intelligence that the Quraysh army was encamped beyond a sand-hill at the other end of the narrow plain. The Muslims had taken possession of the only stream of water in the valley, which proved of great help in winning victory over their enemy. They spent the night quiety, while the Holy Prophet prayed to God for help in his palm-hut constructed for his rest. "O Lord!" he prayed, "Forget not Thy promise of assistance; if this little band were to perish, there will be none to offer unto Thee pure worship."

Position of the two Forces. The Qurayshite army was three times more numerous than the Muslims. It consisted of nearly one thousand men. It was still more superior in weapons and military equipment. While the Muslim army of 313 men had only two horses and seventy camels, the Quraysh had a cavalry of 200 horsemen and 700 camels. The same disparity was found in respect of the weapons of war. Though the Muslims were weak in weapons of war, they were strong in morale and strategy of war. They had the possession of water, which the Quraysh failed to take, although they had arrived on the battlefield earlier. The ground on which the Muslims stood was hard and firm, being the sloping ground of a hill, while the Quraysh were encamped on a sandy soil. Moreover, the rain fell during the night before the day of battle, which rendered the sandy soil all the more difficult and heavy to tread upon. Furthermore, when the battle in the morning began, the sun stared in the face of the Quraysh warriors which confused and puzzled them, while the Muslims had the sun on their back. Thus in their confusion the Quraysh saw the Muslim army much greater in number than it actually was. Then a strong and stormy wind began to blow into the faces of the Quraysh fighters which made them to magnify the numbers and strength of the Muslims still more. Lastly, the Quraysh worriors were fighting for wealth and old ways of life. Many of them doubted the wisdom of fighting at all and were casting their eyes back home. The Muslims, on the other hand, were full of enthusiasm, courage, determination and disdain for life. Many of them were steeled in courage and resolution by the memories of years of persecution and sufferings when they saw their torturers and persecutors before them. And they were commanded by the Holy Prophet who was great a general as he was a preacher of a new faith. His calm and confident words and conduct inspired them to heights of courage and sacrifice. We may, therefore, say in brief that though the Muslims were comparatively week in weapons and numbers, they were however, strong in morale and strategy.

The Battle. Early in the morning, on Friday, the Prophet had hardly arrayed his little army in battle-order, when the Quraysh came marching and penting before it. Wars in ancient Arabia were fought in three stages: first a war of words, then single combats between the champions of the two armies, and lastly a general mix-up. The Battle of Badr was also opened by the Quraysh in this classical fashion. Their heralds stepped forward and poured insults and abuses on the 'renegade' Muslims, and pronounced their doom. The Muslims replied by cries of "Allah Akbar." Then three of the Quraysh leaders, Utba bin Rabia and his brother, Shaiba, and his son, Walid bin Utba, stepped forward and challenged the Muslims to single combat. At this, Hamza, Prophet's uncle, Ali, and Ubaida bin Harish, the cousins of the Prophet, came out. In

a short time, Hamza killed Utba, Ali killed Waild, while Ubaida with some difficulty and at last with the aid of his two companions also killed Shaiba. The Quraysh army was stunned and infuriated by the deaths of their chief leaders. It was a signal for a general advance. With closed ranks they marched slowly but steadily on to the Muslim lines. The Prophet had instructed his soldiers that they were to await the enemy calmly and coolly; and, when within range they were, first to shoot their arrows, then to hurl stones at advancing enemy, and lastly to come to close quarters with swords and scimitars in their hands. The Muslims did as they were instructed and hurled arrows and stones at the enemy who was penting and heaving along the soft and sandy line of advance. And when the Quraysh came close the Muslims fell upon them with the loud cry of "*Ya Mansur! Amit!*"—"O victors, kill '!. The general fighting then began. The Quraysh fought stubbornly. But gradually the tactics of the Holy Prophet of denying water to them and making them to face eastwards with the sun in their faces, and the courage and daring of the Muslims began to tell. The day was stormy. Once when the battle was critical, the Holy Prophet lifted a handful of gravel, and, with words of encouragement to his followers, hurled it in the face of the enemy. The action was well-timed. At that very moment a blast of wind struck in the faces of the Quraysh which confounded them still more. At last bore down by the resolute and unflagging strokes of Muslims, they began to falter and fall back, with the Muslims pressing them hard. Abu Jahl and other Qurayshite leaders were killed in the retreat which, therefore, turned into a rout. Throwing their arms, equipment and baggage all around the battlefield, the Quraysh warriors fled headlong towards Mecca. The Muslims, however, did not pursue them. The Quraysh left behind 70 men dead, including such leaders as Abu Jahl, Utba, Shaiba, Walid, Umaya bin Khalaf and his son, and seventy as prisoners of war, including such of their leaders as Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet, an-Nazr, Uqba, Suhail and a son of Abu Sufyan. Of the Muslims, only 14 were killed. Moreover, the Muslims captured as booty 115 camels, 14 horses, an endless store of clothes, costumes, carpets, articles of fine leather and large amount of equipage and armour.

After resting for three days on the battlefield, the Muslim army returned to Medina. The booty was distributed among the soldiers after deducting the royal fifth for the Holy Prophet. Of the prisoners, only two, an-Nazr and Uqba, were executed for the cruelties they had inflicted on the Muslims in Mecca before the Hijrat, while the rest were treated kindly and humanely. The rich prisoners were allowed to be ransomed by their relatives in Mecca while others were let off after they had taught the art of writing to the boys of Medina. The kind-hearted treatment so impressed them, that many of the prisoners accepted Islam then or later.

Causes of Muslim Victory. We have mentioned above some of the causes of the Muslim victory at Badr which need not be repeated here. But one historical reason need be emphasised. Every new and revolutionary movement in world-history, in spite of its inferiority in numbers, equipment and other wordly advantages, ultimately wins victory over the old order of things. Among other reasons, the most important is that it brings into being a new mind, new ways of thought and action and a new spirit among its followers and champions. They create a new order of things, a new world, in and around themselves, the force of which the old order cannot resist. Therefore, it succumbs to the new. The victory at Badr was a proof of this new and revolutionary energy, spirit and faith of the early Muslims. To the pagan Quraysh, the battle of Badr was nothing more than the usual blood-feud on a grand scale, the type of battle they had fought for centuries in old Arabia. Only the eyes of the Holy Prophet saw that it was a new kind of battle, a battle not to settle old accounts of personal revenge, but to create a new world of Islam. It was not a matter of blood-feud, but was a Holy War, a Jihad, to purge the injustices, ills and evils of the old order and to create a new order of justice and faith. By his words and deeds he infused the same spirit and enthusiasm for the new order and hatred for the old as he had himself. This was the real secret of the victory of the Muslims at Badr, and also of Muslim victories during a century or so to come. It is in the light of this revolutionary significance of the victory at Badr that we must study the historic importance of its consequences.

Effects and Importance of the Battle of Badr. With the victory at Badr begins a new era in the history of Islam and of the world. It is, indeed, difficult to estimate fully the influence and effects of this victory on Arabia, Islam and the world. We may, however, evaluate some of them.

1. *A victory of the forces of Light*. As we have just mentioned above, the battle of Badr was a conflict between the forces of light and darkness, and the victory signalised the victory of the forces of light. It was a struggle between the old and the new in Arabia of the 7th century, a struggle between the paganism of the Jahiliyah Arabs, whose stoutest champions were Quraysh of Mecca and the Islamism of new Arabia which had found refuge and strength in Medina. If the Quraysh army had won the battle of Badr, they would have nipped the new order of Islam in the bud. But they would have also left ancient Arabia engulfed in her ancient ignorance, darkness and barbarism. There would have been no change and no progress in that primitive land. The Age of Jahilyiah would have reigned as darkly and barbarously as ever. Moreover, their victory would have made no change in the external relations of ancient Arabia. It would have remained, as it was before, a

sort of a dark spot betwixt the cultures and civilisations of imperial Rome and Persia, a sort of a dust-bin to dump the refuse of the civilised countries around it. She would have remained a country without culture civilisation, arts, learning, religion and progress of her own. But the victory of the Muslims at Badr ordained that the days of darkness, of barbarism, of ignorance, of irreligion and backwardness were numbered, and that the new age of religion and progress in Arabia had dawned. The Battle Badr was a trial of strength between the rival forces of Islam and Arabian heathendom which could no longer be accommodated in the Peninsula. The survival of each group depended on the issue of the battle, which was finally decided in favour of Islam. As we have noted above, the Prophet prayed to God to give victory to the Muslims, because, he said, "if this little band be vanquished, idolatry will prevail, and the pure worship of Thee cease from off the earth!" Nothing is truer than this. The victory of Islam at Badr meant that idolatry and all that it stood for was to be extirpated from the face of Arabia and of several other lands of the world. This was the spiritual and religious significance of the victory of the brave three hundred and thirteen men at Badr.

2. *A Decisive Battle.* The battle of Badr was one of the most important and momentous battles in the history of the world. It determined the destiny of Arabia, Islam and of the world for all times to come. Never in all history so few men brought about so momentous a change in the destiny of Man, as did the three hundred and thirteen heroes of early Islam on the battlefield of Badr. Professor R. A. Nicholson says that "Badr, like Marathon, is one of the greatest and most memorable battles in all history." Similarly Dermengham remarks, "Badr was the first of a series of victories which were to change the aspect of the world." Syed Ameer Ali observes. "What the victory of Badr was for Islam, the victory of the Milvian Bridge for Chiristianity.... For the Muslims the victory of Badr was indeed most auspicious. It was not surprising that they, like the Israelites or Christians of yore, saw the hand of Providence in their success over the idolaters. Had the Muslims failed, we can imagine what their fate would have been—a universal massacre." The Muslims at Badr were indeed fighting for more than their own lives; they were fighting for every thing they held dear in this world and in the next.

3. *Consolidation of Islam.* The more immediate consequences of the victory of Badr were the consolidation of Islam in and around Medina and the decimation of the Quraysh leadership, if not the destruction of their aggressive power and spirit. A handful of peole who had been, for more than a decade, persecuted, tortured and finally hounded out of their homes and hearts, had at last turned against their relentless persecutors and inflicted a dire

punishment on them. Naturally, Badr appeared to them as 'a miraculous victory'. It was a complete victory and a vindication of Muhammad (Sm) as a leader and of Islam as the Truth. It gave Islam a glory which upto them it had lacked. Consequently, in Medina, the authority of the Holy Prophet as the chief magistrate became supreme, his apotleship confirmed, the power of Islam became consolidated, Abdullah bin Obay became more careful and circumspect in his criticism of the Holy Prophet and the Muslims, and his accomplices, the hypocritic 'Munafiqueen' became silent but more stealthy and clandestine in their conspiracies against the Prophet and Islam. At the same time, Islam spread rapidly in Medina, because the victory of Badr convinced the waverers and the common people of the Truthfulness of the Mecca Faith. People began to believe that the defeat of the Quraysh was due to their heresy, and that God was surely with the Believers and that if they did not mend their ways, a fate similar to that of the discomfitted Quraysh would await them. Nothing succeed like success. Even outside Medina, the Bedouin Arabs, a very shrewd people, also noted in which way the wind was blowing in their land. Many a nomadic tribes in Hijaz began to flock under the banner of Islam in increasing numbers. Thus the victory of Badr turned all eyes upon Muhammad (Sm). If the Charter of Medina was the first great step towards the consolidation of Islam and the national unification of the Arabs, the victory of Badr was the second great stride towards the same goal.

4. *Decimation of the Quraysh leadership*. The battle of Badr not only resulted in the defeat of the Quraysh of Mecca, but it also decimated their leadership. Many of the prominent opponents of Muhammad (Sm) and rulentless persecutors of the Muslims lay dead on the battlefield. A mere list of the names of the dead leaders would be indicative of the loss inflicted on the Quraysh. They were Abu Jahl, the ringleader of the Quraysh, al-Aswad, Hisham bin Abi Huzaifa, (all of the Bani Makhzum), Utbah bin Rabia, his brother, Shaibah, his son Walid, (all of the Banu Umayya), Zama's bin al-Aswad, Abu'l Bakhtari and Naufal bin Khawaylid (all of the Bani Asad), Umayyah bin Khalaf (of the Bani Jumah) and an-Nazr of the Bani Abd ad-Dar. All of them were great merchants of Mecca and implicable in their hatred of Islam. At Mecca, the news of the defeat was received with consternation. Abu Lahab, who for some reason could not come to Badr, died a week after the return of the defeated army due to the intense grief and mortification at the defeat. But so strong was the Quraysh hatred for Islam and so burning was their thirst for revenge that Abu Sufyan, now their leader, asked his fellow-citizens not to lament lest their wrath and enmity towards Muhammad (Sm) might be assuaged by weeping; instead, they must prepare for revenge. It was this revanchist passion which made him to raid Medina

few months after. But when the Holy Prophet with a small force marched out of Medina against him, he precipitately fled back to Mecca.

The deaths of many prominent leaders at Badr brought about one significant change in the Quraysh leadership. Upto the Battle of the Badr, leadership of Quraysh was in the hands of the Bani Makhzum, one of the two powerful and wealthy clans of the Quraysh, to whom Abu Jahl, their chief leader, belonged. Banu Umayya, the other poweful and wealthy clan, played a secondary role. But so many of the leading members of the Bani Makhzum were slain in Badr that this clan temperorily fell into the background, while the clan of Umayya came into the front rank of opposition and hostility towards Islam. Its surviving chief, Abu Sufyan, now became the principal leader of Mecca and also the great opponent of Muhammad (Sm).

5. *Veterans of Badr.* The Triumph of Badr was due to the moral courage and religious fervour of the Muslims. They manifested discipline, contempt of death and dauntless courage, which became the chief traits of the Muslim warriors and enabled them to win great victories and conquests in later times. Indeed, so great a debt Islam and succeeding Muslim generations owe to the 313 heroes of Badr that they were placed in a category by themseles by the grateful posterity. They became, par excellence the most prominent among the Companions of the Holy Prophet and bore the proud title of the 'Badri'. They became, in fact, the peerage of Islam, and were given the first rank in the Register of Pensions which Hazrat Umar, the second Caliph, instituted later, which allocated to them the highest donation of 5000 dirhems annually among the Companions. And they deserved it. It was they who had forged and tested the weapon which gave all the victories to Islam in subsequent ages.

The Jews. The victory of Badr, strange though it may appear, made the Jews of Medina fidgety and apprehensive at the triumph of the Muslims. The Medinese Jews, like other citizens of Medina, welcomed the coming of the Prophet to their city. The Prophet also granted them equal rights and privilege under the Charter of Medina which guaranteed them freedom of conscience and worship. But after a few months, their attitude began to change. They began to criticise the Prophet ; their tongues became loose and their behaviour disrespectful. When the Prophet left for Badr, they openly talked of the victory of the Quraysh and of the downfall and disgrace of Muhammad (Sm). The victory of the Muslims at Badr irritated and angered them as much as the Munafiqeen. One of the Jewish tribe, namely, Bani Qunayqa, who were the goldsmiths of Medina, openly defied the authority of the Holy

Prophet, which was a clear violation of the Charter of Medina. Their quarters were besieged and finally driven out of the city. They went and settled in Khyber, one of the Jewish colonies, north of Medina.

As a result of the Jewish expulsion from Medina, the authority of the Prophet became stronger than before. The triumph of Badr thus strengrhened the temporal power of the Prophet. The reason of the Jewish perfidy was to be found in the failure of their scheme. By welcoming the Muslims and the Holy Prophet to Medina they had hoped to utilise the new power of Islam for their scheme of converting the Arabs to Judaism. In allying themselves with the monotheistic Islam they sought to destroy idolatry in Arabia and spread their own religion. They had, therefore, no desire to form an 'Ummah' with the Muslims as the Prophet had proposed in the Charter of Medina. On the contrary, they wanted to use the Muslims as cat's paw for their own purposes. The change of Qibla had already displeased the Jews. When the Prophet returned victorious from Badr, there hopes were dashed to pieces and their irritation knew no bounds. Hence their insolence behaviour. But, after Badr, the Holy Prophet was on a firmer ground. He was now able to deal properly with these unscrupulous people, who had violated the treaty freely entered into by them. However, as the other two Jewish tribes remained loyal at that time, they continued to enjoy the rights and privileges as ever.

The Battle or Ghazwah of Ohud: A.D. 625.

Its Causes.

The causes of the Battle of Ohud were practically the same as those of the Battle of Badr, with only one difference : the defeat at Badr had intensified the relentless enmity of the Quraysh, because it had, so to say, added, fuel to fire. The proud Quraysh had suffered loss not only in men and material but still more in prestige, on which the success of their commerce and their political position and primacy among the tribes of Arabia depended. They must retrieve it as soon and as much as possible. So the cry of revenge resounded in the valley of Mecca. The Meccan leaders, now headed by Abu Sufyan, prohibited their fellow-citizens from public expression of their grief and sorrow over their dead. This was a tactful move, because the subdued feelings of grief turned into bitter feelings of resentment and created a desire for revenge for the dead ones and for retrieving their lost prestige and position. These feelings prompted Abu Sufyan to vow to lead an expedition of nearly 200 men against the Holy Prophet. It proved itself to be a petty raid, known as the Ghazwat as.Sawiq. He reached a few miles near Medina and was engaged in ravaging the date-groves of the

Medinese, when the Holy Prophet appeared with a small force. On hearing of it, the Meccans felt so nervous that they precipitately fled, leaving behind their bags filled with meal, called in Arabic 'sawiq'; hence the name of this raid as the Ghazwat as-Sawiq. But this raid did nothing to appease the Qurayshite spirit of revenge or amend their position or prestige. On the contrary, they found their commercial life-line to the northern countries still more firmly barred against them. One of the Quraysh leaders, Safwan bin Umayya, endeavoured to send a caravan to the North by a route well to the east of Medina and thus to avoid the blockaded coastal route to the west of Medina. On hearing of it, the Prophet sent Zaid bin Haritha with 100 men who captured the merchandise worth 100,000 dirhams. Like the modern imperialist powers such as the British, the Quraysh were convinced that the trade followed the victorious flag, that is, the caravan follows the sword. In short, their grief, their revengeful spirit, their feelings of hatred for Islam and the Prophet and threat to their commercial interests all combined to make them prepare for a new war with the Muslims. So within a year of the Battle of Badr, on about 11 March, 625 (25/ix/3) the Meccans set out with an army of 3000 well-equipped men, of whom 700 had coasts of mail, and with 200 horse and 3000 camels. Abu Sufyan was in command, partly because to command a Meccan army was a privilege of his Umayad family and mainly because he had now first among the Quraysh leaders. Women were also allowed to accompany the Meccan army. Among them was the wife of Abu Sufyan, Hind bint Utbah, who had joined the expedition to avenge the death of her father, Utbah, killed in Badr. For this purpose, she had hired a negro assassin, named Wahshi to kill Hamzah who had killed her father.

Events.

The Meccan army advanced by easy marches through the Wadi'l-Aqiq. It reached the oasis of Medina on Thursday, 21 March, 625/5-x-3 A. H., and encamped near a hill, called Ohud, north of Medina, on the road leaving Medina for Syria. Hardly had the Meccans reached Medina when the Holy Prophet was informed of the enemy's approach by a scout. Early next day, Friday, a council of war was held by the Prophet. Senior men, including the Prophet and Abdullah bin Obay, were for remaining within Medina whose buildings would afford strong defence against superior numbers of the Quraysh. But younger men were eager to fight the enemy in the open, partly to impress the Bedouin tribes of the Muslim martial spirit and partly to prove that one Muslim was equal to ten infidels. Their enthusiasm made for Prophet to accept their plan and he ordered the Muslim army to march out from Medina. One thousand men joined him, including 300 men of

Abdullah bin Obay. When the Muslim force had marched a couple of miles away, Abdullah bin Obay deserted the Muslims with his 300 followers and returned to the city, leaving the Prophet with 700 men only. Of them only 100 men had coats of mail. But they were all true men, eager to fight a well-equipped enemy four times their number. By night-fall, they reached the foothill of Ohud and rested for the night near the enemy who was still unaware of their bivouac.

Next day, Saturday, early in the morning, the Prophet marched his army unobserved to the western slope of the Ohud and posted it on the rising ground, with the rocklike Ohud behind it. This position had two tactical advantages. The Muslims stood on a rising ground which made it difficult for the enemy to approach them easily, and thus their superiority in numbers was to some extent compensated. Secondly, in case of retreat, as events turned out to be, the Muslims could ascend up the hill. On the top of the Mount Ohud was a little pass. Though the rear was safe due to the hill, the pass could be crossed or the hill circumvented by the Qurayshite cavalry. Anticipating this danger, the Prophet posted a band of 50 archers under the command of Abdullah bin Jubayr behind the Muslim position. They were instructed to guard the pass and, in case enemy horse attacked the Muslims from the flank, to ward off the attack by hurling arrows at the enemy from their prominent position. They were strictly forbidden from leaving their position in any case whatever.

While the Holy Prophet was thus arraying his forces, the Meccan army advanced towards them after crossing the dry bed of a mountain stream which lay between the Muslim army and the Quraysh. Their women were in the front, singing war-songs. On both wings of the Quraysh army were two divisions of cavalry. The right wing was commanded by Khalid bin Walid, the left wing by Ikrima bin Abu Jahl.

As was usual with the ancient Arab warfare, the battle was opened by duels between the champions. Talha, grandson of Abd al-Uzza of the Abd ad-Dar family, was the standard-bearer of the Quraysh host. He sprang forth and challenged the Muslims to a duel. Ali stepped forth and soon killed him. On his death, his brother, Usman, stepped forward and Hamzah came forward and killed him. While these combats were going on, the Meccan women were beating their timbrels loudly and singing :—

We are daughters of the brave.
We tread softly on silken cushions.
Fight boldly and we shall press you to our bosoms,
Fly, and we shall shun you with disgust,
We shall shun you with disgust.

The death of their two heroes sent a wave of dismay through the Qurayshite force, which now advanced towards the Muslims and a general fighting began. When the Meccan cavalry tried to attack the Muslims, the archers held it attack. The same deeds of valour were displayed as at Badr. Abu Dujana; Hamzah, Ali, Zubair and others performing great feasts of daring and courage. After some fighting the Meccans began to waver and fall back. The Muslims pressed them as far as the Qurayshite camp. It was a critical moment. If pressed a little more, the Quraysh host would have fled from the battle-field. But at this critical time, some of the Muslim warriors fell aplundering the Qurayshite camp. When the Maslim archers from their prominent position observed the plundering, all except twelve, deserted their position and hurried down to join in the plunder. Although their commander tried to check them, but he could not restrain them. Within an instant, the skilful eyes of Khalid bin Walid noticed the undefended rear of the Muslim army. He at once collected his cavalry and fell upon the Muslims from behind. Khalid's stab in the back surprised the Muslims. Pressed from both sides by the enemy, many of the Muslim warriors began to waver and several fled from battlefield, while the remainder began to retreat up the hill. When the Qurayshite saw the Muslims retreating, even those of them who had taken to their heels, also returned and re-started fighting. The tide of battle had now turned against the Muslims. The infidels then attacked the Holy Prophet from all sides. He was surrounded and protected by many of his faithful Companions. At this critical moment, he was wounded in the face and fell down. Someone, said to be Ju'al bin Suraqah, one of the archers who did not move from his post and could observe clearly the scene of the battle from his high position, raised the cry that the Prophet was killed. This cry disheartened the Muslims who were still fighting. Many of them fled away, leaving the Prophet with a few of his faithuful Companions. The cry of the Prophet's death had also slackened the war-efforts of the Meccans who believed that with his death their main objective had been achieved. So they also returned to their camp after raising the cry of victory in the namess of their gods. In the meanwhile the Companions carried the Prophet to the heights of the Mount Ohud, where they were secure from the attacks of the enemy. Soon the retreating Muslims heard that their Master was alive and they began to rally around him.

When the Meccans at last found out their mistake, a war-council was held whether to continue fighting, or attack Medina or to return to Mecca with the victory they had already won. The last course was finally adopted and the Meccans began to prepare to return to Mecca. Their leader, Abu Sufyan, came near the hill and cried to the Muslims that it was a return for Badr and that this victory was due to the god, Hubal.

He further challenged the Muslims to meet the Meccans a year later at Badr once again. Then he returned to his camp and ordered his army to march victoriously back to Mecca. Before their departure, however the Meccans savagely mutilated the Muslim heroes who had fallen on the battlefield, including Hamzah whom the negro slave of Hind had stealthily murdered in the heat of the battle and the revengeful Hind had barbarously torn his body to chew his liver and thus fulfilled her savage vow.

The Prophet and the Muslims remained at Ohud till late in the evening, busy in burying their dead, nearly seventy-four in number. The Qurayshite losses were much fewer, that is, only twenty of them were killed. In spite of the Qurayshite barbarities, the Prophet had prohibited the muntilation of their dead, who were buried in a single grave. After completing this task, the Holy Prophet returned to Medina. Next day, on hearing that the enemy was still lurking in the vicinity of Medina, he led out a force against him. But the Meccans were so much awed by their enemy that they hurriedly retreated to Mecca before fighting a second round of battle with the Muslims. The Prophet stayed for several days outside Medina, and thus demonstrated to the desert tribes that the Qurayshite victory at Ohud was a hollow triumph.

Results.

What was the cause of the Muslim defeat ? There was only one reason, namely the disobedience and lack of discipline of the majority of the archers. Their love of plunder proved stronger than their sense of duty. Had they stuck to their post, Khalid bin Walid would never had a chance to attack the Muslims from the rear and thus turn the tide of the battle against them.

But the question is: What kind of defeat was it? So far as the Muslims were concerned and especially, as far as the progress of the Muslim arms was concerned, their defeat at Ohud was a disaster but not a discomfiture. It was a reverse, not a rout. But whatever be the magnitude of the defeat at Ohud, it was certainly a setback for the Muslims in more than a military sense. Firstly, several leading Muslims had fallen on the battlefield, such as Hamzah, Mus'ab bin Umayr, and others. Secondly, it lowered, though not destroyed, the prestige of the Muslims in the hearts of the neighbouring desert tribes. The Quraysh at once set themselves to the task of rousing the nomadic tribes to an attack on Medina. They talked to them about Muhammad's weakness, made promises of booty and gave them bribes to kill Muslims in any way possible. As a result of Qurayshite intrigues and bribes, several nomadic

tribes broke away from their alliance with the Prophet. Some of them even resorted to treachery. For instance, the tribes of Banu Amir and Banu Sulaim invited seventy Muslim missionaries to preach Islam among them, and then treacherously murdered them near a well called Bir Ma'una. The Prophet had to lead several expeditions against them and bring them to former submission. Similarly, seven Muslim teachers were killed or captured by Banu Lihyan at ar-Raji, a place on the Najd road. Harith, the chief of the Mustaliq, dwelling near the coast of the Red Sea, also revolted against Islam. A Muslim force had to be sent to pacify them.

Psychologically, the reverse of Ohud had a great moral lesson for the Muslims. If the victory of Badr had the positive effect of strengthening the character and enhancing the confidence and self-reliance of the Muslims, the defeat of Ohud chastened and sobered them. It taught them the lesson of remaining united and loyal in times of reverse and disappointment. They became more resolute and sincere in their loyalty to Islam and the Prophet. They knew that lack of discipline and obedience was the cause of their defeat, and that love of plunder had led them astray from the path of duty. They now resolved to overcome their weaknesses and to follow the call to duty. It is to such a state of mind that the Quran referred in the Sura iii, v. 133 : "Be not cast down, neither be ye grieved. Ye shall be yet victorious if ye are true Believers. If a wound hath befallen you, verily a wound like unto it hath befallen your enemy. This is the various success We cause to alternate among men, that God may know those that believe, and may have witnesses amongst you.........that God might prove them that believe, and annihilate the Infidels. What ! did ye think to enter paradise, while as yet God knew not those that fight for him, and knew not the persevering ones amongst you ?".

The defeat of Ohud also brought home to the Muslims a supreme fact, namely, the mortality of Muhammad (Sm). When the rumour of the Prophet's death spread among the Muslims on the battlefield, all but thirty or forty of them remained to defend him, although he was calling on them to rally around him. After the battle, the Prophet asked the Muslims to realise that he was but a man like any of them. Though God had chosen him as His Messenger, yet that did not make him divine or immortal. Being so, why should there be a panic when a rumour of his death broke out among them ? Did it mean that his cause was bound to his life ? No, the cause was to last for ever, though the Prophet would not live for ever. If he died, it would remain. Sooner or later, he would die, and then what? Why, of course, Islam would continue to flourish. This fact was recorded in the Holy Quran in Sura iii, "Muhammad is no more than an apostle ; other apostles

have already passed away before him. If he dies, therefore, or be slain, will ye turn on your heels? But he who turneth on his heels shall not injure God at all. And God will certainly reward the faithful."

The Meccans : How did the victorious Meccans behave ? Ohud was a victory for the Meccans. But just as it was not an out-and-out defeat for the Muslims, so it was not an outright victory for the Meccans. As a matter of fact, they were not clear or unanimous about their objectives or war-aims. Most of them had come to Ohud to seek revenge for the death of their near and dear ones on the battlefield of Badr which was a mere personal affair. A few of them, mostly leaders, were bent upon the death of the Prophet and no more. None of them had the aim of destroying Islam and the Muslims root and branch. When they saw seventy of the Muslims dead and most others fleeing from the field of battle, their motive of personal revenge was satisfied. For them the battle was then virtually over. When the Qurayshite leaders heard the rumour of the Prophet's death, their war-aim was more than fulfilled. Although Abu Sufyan and other leaders were already told that the Prophet and his leading Companions were still alive, yet they decided to return home without continuing the battle any longer. They only challenged the Musims to meet them again a year after at Badr. Although they had thoroughly mauled the Muslim force, and although the city of Medina lay defenceless and exposed to their attack, yet they did not press their advantage in either direction. On the contrary, they precipitately returned to Mecca. This 'glorious return' reveals both their folly and their weakness. Had they continued the war or had they attacked Medina, they would have crushed Islam for all time, and also saved their wealth andtheir century-old political prestige and position among the Arabs. In short, they would have been at long last at quits with the Holy Prophet. But instead of inflicting a crushing defeat on the Muslims, they were satisfied with a nominal and temporary victory over them. And it was a Pyrrhic victory. They had spent so much in preparing for it. But their victory proved that Muhammad (Sm) was able to hold his own, whether victorious or defeated, against the full might of the proud merchants of Mecca. This revealed their weakness. It was not merely a weakness of military strategy or leadership. It also revealed their ideological weakness. As we have mentioned above, the Quraysh stood for the old order of things, while the Prophet for the new. In this ideological struggle between the old and the new, more than one advantage lay with the Prophet. The Quraysh had no real unity among them, while the Muslims had. Their counsels were divided; their objectives confused; and their leadership boistrous but vacillating and supine. Personal motives of revenge rather than collective aims dominated their thoughts. Being good merchants, they were more careful of

their wealth and comforts than of preserving their way of life. Though they lustily shouted, "Glory to al-Uzza ! Glory to Hubal!", but their idolatrous faith could not produce in their hearts the same conviction and confidence as did the monotheistic faith in the Muslims'. And religious faith was the end-all and be-all of the 7th century ideology. This was the basic weakness of the Quraysh. Victory or no victory, their ultimate defeat was inevitable.

Battle of the Ditch or the Allies. Feb-March, 627.

Causes.

A year pased since the battle of Ohud. In accordance with Abu Sufyan's challenge, the Prophet led a Muslim force of about 1500 men with wares and merchandise to the caravan-market of Badr. The Muslims maintained a standing camp at Badr for eight days in defiance of the Quraysh, who did not appear at the place. The Muslims bartered their goods to advantage and returned to Medina. This defiance was a triumph of the Prophet and it mortified the Quraysh. They began to prepare for a still greater attack on Medina. For this purpose they resolved to assemble as large a force as possible. The Prophet's expeditions against the desert tribes provided them with many allies among them. Moreover, the Jewish tribe of Bani Nazir, who had been driven from Medina to Khyber in the north, also joined hands with the Qurayshite leaders in conspiring against the Prophet. With the aid of the Jewish intrigues, and Mecca's gold, the clever-tongue emissaries of Abu Sufyan succeeded in forming a formidable league with the Bedouin tribes, reinforced by Abyssinian mercenaries. The Bedouin allies or confederates (al-Ahzab) comprised the clans of the powerful Najdi tribe of Ghatafan, who was of late waxing hostile of the Prophet and Islam. Ashja and Murra each brought 400 warriors; and the Beni Fezara a large force, with 1000 camels, under Oyaina; the Sulaim who had been involved in the massacre at Bi'r Ma'una, joined with 700 men. Other Najdi tribes, the Bani Asad and Bani Sa'd also joined the allies, because they too were attacked by the expeditions sent against them by the Prophet. The Quraysh themselves brought 4000 soldiers, including 300 horse and 1500 camel-riders. The whole army of the allies was variously estimated between 10,000 to 25,000 strong. It was under the supreme command of Abu Sufyan.

Events.

The day the confederate army left Mecca, the friendly tribe of Khuza'a informed the Prophet of its departure. The Prophet at once took steps to meet this danger which was far greater than

the Muslims had faced at Ohud two years ago. They could muster an army of about 3000 men and a cavalry of 50 horsemen. Obviously this army was quite inadequate to meet the enemy in the open. As usual the Prophet consulted his Companions about the plan of war. In view of the defeat of Ohud it was decided to fight the huge enemy force from within Medina. On its northern side was a wall of steep cliffs, on the eastern side was a compact wall of houses of the Medinite Jews and Muslims respectively. Being so situated, Medina could be defended well on three sides. Only there was no impediment to the enemy's advance on its southern side, where the city opened out to the gardens and the oasis. How to defend it on this side? This knotty question was solved by Salman, one of the Companions of the Prophet, by suggesting to dig a ditch from one end of the open side to the other. He was a citizen of the Persian Iraq and was acquainted with the Persian mode of trench warfare. His proposal was at once adopted and put into execution. Joined by the Prophet, the Muslims set themselves to dig a long ditch, broad enough to be impassable by man or horse. For eight days and nights they worked hard at it, and had barely finished the job when the enemy came in sight. Hence it came to be known as the Battle of the Ditch.

The allied army, confident of an easy and quick victory, advanced determinedly upon the city. But it came to an abrupt halt when it found a deep and long moat between it and the city. The Arabs are a brave people, but conservative in military matters as in social affairs. They loved to fight in the open and hated to take any man-made advantage against their enemy. Trench-warfare seemed to the Qurayshite warriors both an unfamiliar sight and a cowardly way of fighting, unbecoming of Arabs. When they found a ditch in front of them, they hurled abuses and insults on the Muslims. They proclaimed it to be an unworthy subterfuge. "Truly this ditch," they taunted, "is the artifice of the Ajmis and a trick to which no Arab would ever stoop." The Muslims replied—more logically—by hurling arrows and stones at them, and compelled them to withdraw to a respectable distance from the ditch. Thus began the siege of Medina which lasted for about thirty days.

For a few days the two armies remained watching each other. But then Abu Sufyan, who had hoped to defeat the Muslims in one day and be back in Mecca within a couple of weeks, became impatient. His Bedouin allies had also expected easy loot and quick return. They were not accustomed to fight sieges which disheartened them and caused disaffection amongst them. Abu Sufyan knew full well that if they once became discontented and disheartened, they would at once give up fighting and return to their pastures and wash their hands of the Meccan quarrel with the Prophet. Abu

Sufyan was, therefore, in difficult, if not desperate, situation. His superiority of numbers was nullified by the un-Arabian ditch, which baffled all attempts of the Allies to cross. But he had one advantage over his enemies. It was the Jewish tribe of Bani Qurayza who were conspiring with the Meccans against their fellow-citizens. They were contemplating of joining hands with the besiegers and attack Muslims from behind. Such an attack would have been a stab in the back : it would have upturned all the defences of Medina. The Prophet was very disquiet on this treachery of the Jews. One day he consulted his leading Companions about it and suggested that they should win over the Meccan allies, the Ghatafanites by offering them one-third produce of the dates of Medina. Sa'd bin Muadh, the Aus leader, replied. "Do you propose this by command of Allah, or is it your own suggestion?" The Prophet said that if it had been Allah's command, he would not have consulted them; it was his own plan to counteract the Jewish treachery. At this Sa'd exclaimed, "O Messenger of Allah! When we were fellow-idolaters with the Ghatafanites, we never gave a date to them without selling it. Should we now, when we are in faith, give them free? No, they would have dates by fighting for it. As regards the alleged Jewish treachery, I shall go and find it out myself." He went straight to the strongholds of Bani Qurayza on the western outskirts of Medina. Before the Hijra, the Aus and the Bani Qurayza were allies. He expected them to receive him with open arms. But when he called upon the Jewish leaders and reminded them of their treaty with the Prophet of Allah, they replied from the walls of their forts that they did not know who this Messenger of God and what treaty they had with him. Sa'd bih Muadh returned to the Prophet convinced of the Jewish treachery. The Prophet, however, could do nothing against him except placing a small detachment near their forts to watch the Jewish movements. They also did not move, for they waited for a favourable moment. By this they meant the moment when the Mecca army would cross the ditch in strength and engage the defenders in a battle inside Medina. But such a moment never came. This delay proved to be their undoing and of their Qurayshite friends.

In the meanwhile the trench was vigilantly guarded by the Muslims, with the Quraysh army surging on the other side. One day they at last found a weak spot in the ditch were it was possible to cross it. With the help of the traitors, a party of the Quraysh including Ikrimah bin Abu Jahl, Amr, an uncle of Prophet's wife, Khadija, and Naufal bin Abdullah crossed the ditch at this spot and challenged the Muslims vauntingly. It was a critical moment because others might also cross the ditch like them. At once Ali, Sa'd bin Muadh and others moved against them. Ali fought and killed Amr. He next killed Naufal, and wounded Ikrimah. Sa'd bin Muadh was severely wounded by Ikrimah, who however escaped

across the trench with great difficulty. Thus the invaders were thrown back and a critical situation was saved. But this attempt had encouraged the besiegers a lot and for the next several days they made repeated efforts to cross the ditch in strength. It was a hard time for the Muslims trying to keep them at an arms length. Whenever the enemy came near the ditch, the Muslims hurled stones and arrows at them. Still so hard pressed the Muslims were that they had to stay night and day near the trench fighting and guarding it and could not even assemble in the mosque for prayers. The ceaseless fighting and sleepless vigilance began to tell upon the defenders who began to feel harassed and wearied. The city also began to feel distress.

War, said the Holy Prophet, is a game of tricks. In his distress he also hit upon a ruse, by which he expected to sow seeds of suspicion and distrust between the Jews and the Quraysh, whose secret alliance was causing much anxiety to him. He sent a man to the Bani Qurayza who told them to be careful of the Quraysh demand for a general assault on Medina and accept it only on the condition of giving hostages to them lest they retire from Medina leaving the Jews to bear the brunt of Muslim hostility single-handed. His advice was accepted by the Jews. Then he went to the leaders of the Quraysh and informed them that the Jews were a treacherous lot who would ask them to provide hostages before joining in a general attack on Medina, Unfortunately for Abu Sufyan, when he resolved to attack Medina in strength, it was a Jewish Sabbath. They refused to join him in the attack and asked for hostages. This demand confirmed the suspicions of the Jewish faithlessness and both parties began to distrust each other. Thus all hopes of Jewish aid faded into nothing.

A month had now passed since the siege began. The Arabs, and especially the Bedouins, were not accustomed to fight such long-drawn wars. They were chagrinned by the trench and irritated by their inability to draw the Muslims out into a general fighting. Their supplies also began to run short. Moreover, it was winter which is particularly nasty and tricky in Medina, with much drizzling and raining and icy cold winds. They were, therefore, distressed by the shortage of food and forage and by the inclemency of weather. Everyday a large number of their camels and horses died. But what proved to be the proverbial last straw on the camel's back was a storm of wind. One night, one of those stormy winds for which Medina in winter was notorious, began to blow hard on the tents of Quraysh anh their confederates upturning them. It was a *coup de grace* to their morale, which had already sank very low. Abu Sufyan resolved to raise the siege. At the dead of night he called upon his Quraish soldiers and led them at once back to Mecca. His allied Bedouin tribes also went to their

desert pastures. No sooner did the enemy depart than the storm subsided. Next morning when the day dawned, it was a sunny day and not a single enemy to be seen. The deserted camp was littered with the dead bodies of the horses, camels and sundry other things left behind by the enemy.

Results.

The losses on both sides were very little; only nine Muslims were killed. The military reasons why the Quraysh failed in their design were primarily the superior strategy of the Holy Prophet, his intelligence service and secrets agents. The trench proved to be a decisive factor. In this case also the Prophet proved that in the struggle between the old and the new, the new had superiority over the old. The Quraysh could only jibe and fret in front of the trench, bet they were effectively baukled by it. The Prophet, as the leader of a new movement, proved that he had no reluctance to utilise anything new and untried; if war is a game of deception, it is also an art of new weapons and methods. The Quraysh of Mecca would neither adopt a new religion, nor adopt new methods of warfare. They relied on the superiority of numbers and on their cavalry. But the trench effectively kept their horse in check and nullified their superiority in numbers. Herein lay the reasons of their failure and discomfiture. The delay caused by the siege also exposed another weakness of the Quraysh. Their leaders had based all their calculations on a quick victory. They had not provided for food and forage for more than a week or so. As the siege continued for about a month, the confederates ran short of supplies. The result was that they, especially the Bedouins, became wearied of the struggle. This revealed another weakness of the confederates. In spite of their great numbers, they had no unity or coherence. Hope of plunder and quick victory kept them united for some time. But then the Muslim secret agents sowed the seeds of suspicion and disunity among the Quraysh and their allies. In contrast to this, the Muslims presented a picture of unity and discipline. They presented a united front to all the intrigues and treachery which the Quraysh endeavoured to spread among them. On the other hand, the Prophet was able to sow suspicion and distrust between the Quraysh and Bani Qurayiza and prevented the opening of a second front against the Muslims by the Jews. In the war of wits the Prophet was as successful as in the war of weapons; he outwitted his enemies at their own game of intrigue and treachery. In a way this psychological warfare was more decisive than the war of arms, because if the Jews had attacked the Muslims from the other side, the Muslim defences would have been out-turned and their army of 3000 men overwhelmed and annihilated. Islam would never have survived this disaster. Professor Joseph Hell has rightly remarked, "The result of the Battle of the Ditch was a fresh victory of organi-

sation over sheer mass power."

The Battle of the Ditch records a turning point in the long-drawn struggle between the Quraysh and the Muslims. For the last five years the Quraysh were on the offensive. Every time they mobilised greater forces against the Muslims, whose numbers and resources also increased but not in commensuration with those of their enemies. In the Battle of Badr they had to fight an enemy three times stronger, but in the Battle of the Ditch they had to fight an enemy five to ten times stronger. But each time they held their own against heavy odds. This time, however, the failure of the Quraysh proved to be decisive. Their resources were exhausted, their wealth consumed, their prestige gone and their allies dispersed in disgust. In fact, their situation was dismal. Their trade with Syria was gone and their position in northern Arabia was shaken beyond repair. They could no more lead a fresh military expedition against Medina. Their aggressive spirit and offensive energy were frustrated. Henceforth they passed on to the defensive. Though they could hold on their city for three years more, but that was only under a treaty with the Prophet and on his sufferance. Winds of change were now blowing over Arabia, particularly over Mecca. The more intelligent among the Quraysh realised this situation very well. That was why we find another silent but subtle change in their leadership. Abu Sufyan and his Ummayyad party among the Quraysh leaders understood well that the game was up. He was even in favour of making a negotiated settlement with the Prophet and derive for his Quraysh tribe as much advantage as possible from the rising importance and power of the Prophet and the Muslims in the politics of Arabia. His moves in this direction were, however, opposed by their political rivals, Bani Makhzum. Their power had eclipsed since Badr. But at this juncture, after five years, they had again become leaders of the Quraysh. This silent revolution in Quraysh leadership prevented a rapprochement between the Quraysh of Mecca and the Muslims. It needed the shock treatment of the march to Mecca three years later to open the eyes of the proud leaders of the Quraysh to the realities of their weakened situation. For the time being we shall leave the proud merchants of Mecca to bemoan their departed glory and turn our attention towards the Jews of Medina. One of the results of the Battle of the Ditch was the extirpation of the Jews from their native city.

CHAPTER 6

EXPULSION OF THE JEWS FROM MEDINA

The Jews of Yathrib were divided into several clans, traditionally grouped into three tribes, namely, Bani an-Nadir, Bani Qaynuqa and Bani Qurayza. Bani Qaynuqa possessed no agricultural lands. But they lived in a compact settlement where they had a market and carried on several crafts, especially of goldsmith, and banking. The other two tribes, an-Nadir and Qurayza, were agriculturists. In fact they possessed some of the richest lands in Yathrib, where they had many gardens of date-palm. Besides this, there were many other flourishing Jewish colonies in the north of Yathrib, especially at Khayber, with whom the Yathribite Jews had close relations. The basic cause of the Arab-Jewish rivalry was economic rather than religious. The Jews acted as bankers and money-lenders to their Arab compatriots. Partly because of their money exactions and mainly because of their fertile agricultural lands, much rivalry prevailed between the land-hungry Arabs and the Jews. The Jews had many, strongholds in and around Yathrib. Thus they held their own against their Arab rivals, till the Muslims came when the tables were turned against them. The expulsion of the Jewish tribes from Medina was therefore due to political, economic and religious reasons.

Muhammad's endeavour to win the Jews. Whatever might be the attitude of the Jews, the Prophet endeavoured at first to win their favour to his nascent Medinese state during the early days of the Hijra. For this purpose he drew the Charter or Treaty of Medina, under which he gave the Jews an important position in the new state he was building. The relevant clauses of this Charter were :—

1. "The Jews domiciled in Yathrib shall form with the Muslims one composite nation or Ummah;

2. "The Jews who attach themselves to our Commonwealth shall have an equal right with our own people to our assistance and good offices;

3. "The Jews shall practise their religion as freely as the Muslims; and

4. "The clients and allies of the Jews shall enjoy the same security and freedom."

Besides these political rights the Prophet made several

religious concessions to the Jews in order to win their favour and loyalty to the new Muslim state and community. The holy city of the Jews, Jerusalem, was to be the Qiblah of the Muslims. Following the Jewish practice, the Muslims also kept fast of Ashura. Like the Jews, they also prayed at the mid-day worship. The Prophet permitted the Muslims to eat food with the Jews and also to marry Jewish women.

Break with the Jews. In spite of these rights and concessions, the Jews became increasingly unfriendly and hostile to the Prophet and Islam after a year or so of the Hijra. The reason was the Jewish design to dominate Arabia politically and religiously. They had this aim long before the advent of Islam in Medina. After the Hijra, they planned to use the new force of Islam to this end. They knew that there was much in common between Islam and Judaism, which would pave the path to the ultimate Judaization of the pagan tribes of Arabia. What they could not attain by their own efforts, they dreamed of achieving with the aid of the Muslims. But the increasing power and influence of the Prophet and Islam in and around Medina and, especially, the Muslim victory at Badr soon disillusioned the Jews of their dreams of Judaical proselytism of Arabia. Moreover, they found that the Treaty of Medina gave them an assured but subordinate role in the new community of Islam. So they became more and more hostile towards the Prophet and Islam, and expressed their bitterness and hostility in many ways.

Denunciation of the Jews. The Jews gave yet another reason to be denounced by the Prophet. They joined hands with the Munafiqeen or the Hypocrites, led by Abdallah bin Obay. He was an ally of the Jews, particularly of the Bani Qaynuqa, before the Hijra. Like them, he was also unfriendly towards the Prophet whom he believed to have usurped his chances of chieftainship of Medina. The alliance between the two enemies of Islam made the Prophet to take steps against the Jews. The differences between the Muslims and the Jews were emphasised; Qiblah was changed from Jerusalem to Mecca; the fasting of Ramazan instead of Ashura was enjoined and the Jews were denounced for altering the text of their holy books and corrupting the true faith of Abraham.

In spite of the treaty-relations, broadmindedness and tolerance which the Prophet had shown towards the Jews, their animosity towards the Prophet and Islam went on waxing bitter. Their poets and bards composed verses and lampoons against him and the Quran. A few of them had to be assassinated by faithful Muslims in order to silence them, which further increased the Jewish hostility. The Prophet viewed their animosity with as much concern as that of the Quraysh of Mecca. After the Battle of Badr he was

in a position to take steps against one of the Jewish tribes, the Bani Qaynuqa.

Expulsion of Bani Qaynuqa February, 624 A.D.

Qaynuqa was a tribe of goldsmiths. Its stronghold and market were in the outskirts of Medina. It was a confederate of Abdallah bin Obay and an ally of his tribe, Khazraj. The relations between Qaynuqa and the Muslims were particularly bitter, because to the religious ill-feelings were added economic causes. The Qaynuqa goldsmiths were bankers. They lent money to the Muslims and came down upon them as exacting creditors. As Islam had recently prohibited usury , the Muslims regarded these Jews with bitter feelings. Ultimately their relations were so strained that the Jews violated the Treaty of Medina.

The event which led to the expulsion of Qaynuqa from Medina was an insult to a Muslim girl. She had come to the shop of a Qaynuqa goldsmith for buying some ornaments. While sitting in the shop, a Jewish youth playfully pinned her skirt to her bodice. The Arab women did not wear anything under their skirts. The result was that when this young lady stood up, her back was exposed to the lewd jeers of the bystanders. Upon this insult a Muslim killed one of the lighthearted Hebrews who were laughing at her. Soon the Jews fell upon the Muslim and killed him. This became the *casus belli* of the first battle between the Jews and the Muslims.

The Prophet at once hoisted the white standard under which the Muslims had fought in Badr hardly a month ago. He led the Muslims to the stronghold of Bani Qaynuqa. They retired into their fort end locked the gates. They were besieged for fifteen days, till famine and starvation compelled them to surrender to the Prophet at discretion. Four hundred men were marched out of the fort with their hands tied behind their backs. The Prophet ordered their heads to be cut off. When Abdallah bin Obay heard of it, he hurried to the place and urgently begged for mercy. He was still too strong to be rejected his petition. The Prophet commuted the death sentence to exile. The whole tribe of Qaynuqa was ordered to leave Medina. They proceeded towards the north and ultimately reached Azriat on the borders of Syria. As they had no agricultural lands, the Muslims acquired their household goods, arms and goldsmith's tools, which were distributed among the Muslims after deducting the royal fifth for the Prophet.

Expulsion of Bani an-Nadir: June, 625 A. D.

The underlying cause of the expulsion of the second Jewish tribe was economic. The remaining two Jewish tribes, an-Nadir

and Qurayza, possessed vast and fertile agricultural lands in the oasis of Medina. Since the coming of the Muslims from Mecca, pressure on land had increased and an urgent need was felt for the re-allotment of land among the people of Medina.

The immediate cause of their expulsion was the Jewish treachery and violation of the pact with the Prophet. A few months after the expulsion of Qynuqa, one of the Jewish poets, Ka'b ibn al-Ashraf, a member of an-Nadir, was assassinated by five Muslims. He had incited the Quraysh in Mecca, vilified the Prophet and the Muslims and insulted Muslim women in his verses and lampoons. The death of Ka'b alarmed the Jews. Their chiefs came to the Prophet and entered into a fresh treaty with him. Then came the battle of Ohud. The defeat of the Muslims in this battle encouraged their enemies to raise their heads against them. The desert tribes of Najd resorted to treachery. The Bedouin tribe, Bani Sulaim, treacherously killed a party of 40 Muslims who were invited by the chief of Bani Amir to teach Islam to his tribe. This is known as the incident of Bir Ma'una; where this tragedy had taken place. Only two Muslims survived. When one of the survivers, Amr ibn Umayya, was returning to Medina, he met two men of Bani Amir. Believing them to be enemies, he killed them, although they had come from Medina under the protection of the Prophet. When Amr related this incidence to the Prophet, he decided that blood-money must be paid. The Jewish tribe, an-Nadir was a confederate of Bani Amir and was also bound by the treaty to join with the Muslims to pay blood-money. The Prophet went to their settlement to demand their share of the blood money for the Bir Ma'una incident, which they apparently agreed to pay. While collecting the money, the Prophet and his Companions sat under the wall of their stronghold. The Prophet noticed some unusual activity on the roof of the stronghold, where a big stone was lying. Divining treachery to assassinate him and his Companions, he quietly got up and returned to the Mosque, where he told the Muslims that the Jews were preparing to roll down the stone in order to kill them.

The Holy Prophet now sent Mohammad bin Maslama, a leader of the Aus tribe friendly to an-Nadir, with an ultimatum : they were to leave Medina within ten days bag and baggage, but were to receive half of the produce of their lands. The Jews angrily rejected these terms and began to prepare for a battle. Abdallah bin Obay, the leader of the Munafiqeen, sent them a word that he and his men would help them in fighting the Muslims. Thus eneouraged, they defied the Prophet to do what he liked against them. They shut themselves upon in their stronghold. The Prophet led an army against them and laid siege to their fort, which lasted for two weeks. The Nadir looked in vain for help either from Abdallah bin Obay or from the tribes of Najd. The third Jewish tribe, Bani

Qurayza, remained loyal to their pact with the Prophet. At last they offered to submit to the Prophet on old terms. It was agreed that an Nadir would leave Medina with such belongings as they could carry on their camels, but they would not take away their arms with them. Thus they departed from Medina on 600 camels. Part of them settled in Khayber where they had lands and the rest went to Jericho in Syria. Those of their chiefs, namely, Huyayy and Kinana, who settled at Khaybar, later entered into intrigues with the Quraysh of Mecca and the Ghatafan for an attack on Medina, which ultimately took the form of the invasion and siege of Medina or the Battle of the Ditch, as we have already described. The lands of the Nadir, left behind in Medina, were distributed among the Muhajreen and the two destitute Ansars. As a result of it, the Emigrants acquired an independent source of income and remained no longer dependent upon the bounty of their Ansar brethren.

The expulsion of the Nadir broke the back of the Jewish treachery and hypocrisy in Medina which had given such a headache to the Prophet since his arrival in the city. It also cowed the Munafiqueen of Ahdallah bin Obay. It strengthened the political unity and solidarily of the young republic of Medina and enable it to resist successfully the united might of the Meccans, the Najdi Bedouin tribes and the intrigues of the Jews of Khaybar and Medina. At the time of the siege of Medina, the remaining Jewish tribe, Qurayza, actively conspired with Abu Sufyan to attack the Muslims from behind when they were fighting for their very life.

Extirpation of Bani Qurayzah : March , 627 A.D.

The causes for the extirpation of the Qurayza were generally the same as those of other Jewish tribes, but only more serious. They were, briefly, the need to relieve the land pressure, the Jewish treachery, and particularly their violation of the pact with the Prophet during the critical days of the Battle of the Siege of Medina. It was a heinous crime for which they deserved severer punishment than the one meted out to other Jewish tribes. As soon as the Quraysh and their allies raised the Siege and departed home, the Prophet called upon the Muslims to march against the traitorous Jews. Their stronghold was besieged for about 25 days. Reduced to bitter straits, they offered to surrender on the same conditions as did the Nadir, which were rejected. At last they were compelled to surrender unconditionally. Their men were led out of the fort to one side, with their hands tied behind their backs and were placed under a guard commanded by Mohammad bin Maslama. The women and cihldren were separated from their menfolk and placed under another guard.

In pre-Islamic days the Bani Qurayza were the confederates of the Aus tribe, just as an-Nadir were the allies of the Khazraj. The Aus appealed to the Prophet to treat their allies in the same lenient way as he had treated an-Nadir on the appeal of the Khazraj. "Are you content," asked the Prophet, "that they be judged by one from among yourselves ?" The Ausites readily accepted this arrangement and the Prophet nominated Sa'd bin Muadh, one of the Aus chiefs, as a judge.

Sa'd had bitter feelings against his former Jewish confederates. During the critical days of the Battle of the Ditch he had come to them to join hands against the enemies of the Muslims. Their rude behaviour, had, however convinced him that they intended treachery and conspiracy by renouncing the treaty solemnly made with the Prophet. He then went back to the fighting on the trench, where he received a mortal wound from an enemy arrow. He was still under treatment for his wound when the Prophet summoned him to judge the affair of Bani Qurayza. After binding all the parties concerned, the Jews, the Prophet and his own tribe, the Aus, to abide by his decision, he declared, "My judgment is that the men of Bani Qurayza shall be put to death, the women and children sold into slavery, and their properties divided amongst the Muslims." A cry of pain and anguish burst out from the lips of the condemned people. The Prophet stopped further murmurings by declaring that Sa'd's verdict was the judgment of God, and carried it out to the last letter. Six or seven hundred men of Qurayza were there and then put to the sword under the supervision of Hazrat Ali and Zubayr, while their women and children were sold to the slave merchants. The lands and household articles of Bani Qurayza were distributed among the Muslim soldiers.

The extermination of the Qurayza has evoked much criticsm from the European historians of Islam. For instance, Sir William Muir has called it 'a butchery' and 'a massacre' while others have dubbed it was savage and inhuman. But a judicious reader would keep in mind all facts of the case before pronouncing his own judgment. We may here recount the whole affair in the words of an English historian, S. Lane-Poole, who writes, "Not satisfied with tormenting Muhammad (Sm) with questions on the Torah which they were always wrangling about themselves, they took hold of everyday formulas of Islam, the daily prayers and ejaculations and twisting their tongues, mispronounced them so that they meant something absurd or blasphemous. When asked which they preferred, Islam or idolatry, they frankly avowed that the preferred idolatry. To lie about their own religion and to ridicule another religion that was doing a great and good work around them was not enough for those Jews, they must set their poet to work to lampoon the women of the believers in obscene verse, and such

outrages upon common decency, no to say upon the code of Arab honour and chivalry, became a favourite occupation among the poets of the Jewish clans."

"There were offences against the religion and the persons of the Muslims. They also conspired against the State. Muhammad (Sm) was not only the preacher of Islam, he was also the King of Medina, and was responsible for the safety and peace of the city. As a Prophet, he could afford to ignore the jibes of the Jews, though they maddened him to fury ; but as the chief of the city, the general in a time of almost continual warfare, when Medina was kept in a state of military defence and under a sort of military discipline, he could not overlook treachery. He was bound by his duty to his subjects to suppress a party that might (and nearly did) lead to the sack of the city by investing armies. It was a harsh, bloody sentence, worthy of the episcopal generals of the army against the Albigenses or the deeds of the Augustan age of Puritanism ; but it must be remembered that the crime of these men was high treason against the state, during the time of the siege, and those who have read how Wellington's march could be traced by the bodies of the deserters and pillagers hanging from the trees need not be surprised at the summary execution of a traitorous clan."

Moreover, judged according to the sacred laws of the Jewish scriptures, Bani Qurayza deserved their punishment. Sa'd bin Mu'adh really acted according to the instructions laid down in the 20th chapter of Deuteronomy, which says :—

"When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, thou shalt besiege it. And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine bands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself."

For the Holy Prophet, the punishment of the Jews was not a question of religion; it was readly a question of state, a question of preserving the peace and order of Medina, surrounded as it was by powerful enemies, the Quraysh of Mecca, the tribes in the deserts of Arabia and the Jews of Khaybar. Moreover, he had to upold his authority within Medina which had so long been challenged by the Jews and their Hypocritical allies of Abdallah bin Obay. With the extermination of the last Jewish clan, Medina was purged of all

disloyal elements; the Hypocrites were silenced and the Republic of Medina was firmly unified and pacified under the supreme authority of the Holy Prophet. He could now devote his attention to the problems of Arabia.

CHAPTER 7

THE EXPANDING HORIZONS

From the Treaty of Hudaybia to the Fall of Mecca (628 to 630 A.D.)

The bitter struggle between the Prophet and the Quraish was now over. A great vista of expanding horizons now opened before the Prophet and the Muslims after their victory in the Battle of the Ditch. This victory had at least settled one issue—namely, the failure of so to say, the containment policy of the Quraysh by throwing a *cordon sanitaire* around Medina, in order to contain or confine Islam to its small population. Instead, the remaining years of the Holy Prophet's life saw Islam expanding and spreading among the tribes of Arabia from one corner of the Peninsula to the other. At the same time the Prophet sent messages of Islam to the neighbouring kings and emperors. Before we may relate the events of the last years of the Prophet's life, we may here delineate main trends of his policy which become apparent during these years. Broadly speaking, they are :—

1. Prophet's policy of containment of the Quraysh of Mecca : Truce of Hudaybia.
2. His Policy of Northern Advance: conquest of Khybar, etc.
3. His Messages to the kings and emperors of the neighbouring countries ;
4. His Policy of 'winning the hearts' of the Meccans : Fall of Mecca.
5. His Policy of Southern Advance; War with Hawazin.
6. His Policy of Unifying the Arabian Tribes ; Tribal Deputations.

The Truce of Hudaybia

The Battle of the Ditch was a turning point in the fortunes of Islam. For five years the Quraysh of Mecca had tried their level best to crush Islam and the Prophet. At long last the Prophet emerged victorious and secure in Medina. But a great danger still confronted him. The Quraysh had woven a wide network of alliances and confederacies with the Bedouins of Najd and the Jews of Khayber. During the year following the Battle of the Ditch, the Prophet sent or himself led seventeen expeditions against the

Bedoun tribes with a view to smash Qurayshite influence among them and to bring them within the fold of the new Republic of Islam, *Pax Islamica*. This became the foundation of his policy of unifying Northern Arabia from the borders of Syria to the confines of Mecca. But it became obvious that the Bedouin would not submit politically or be converted to Islam unless and until he Qurayshite confederacy and influence were not completely effaced from the regions around Medina. This purpose was achieved by the Truce of Hudaybiya.

Prophet sets out on Pilgrimage: February 628. About a year after the Battle of the Ditch, the Holy Prophet saw a dream of his visit to Ka'ba. Next morning he called upon the Muslims to prepare for a journey. A few days later he told them that the purpose of journey was the performance of the Umra or Lesser Pilgrimage. 'Umra is not as elaborate a pilgrimage as the Haj. (It can be performed any time of the year, while the Hajj can be performed only in the month of Zu'l-Hijja). On hearing this news the Muslims, especially the Emigrants, were filled with joy to visit their birth-place which they had not seen for the last six years. The Prophet and the Muslims bedecked themselves in the garb of the pilgrims, that is, two sheets of unsewn cloth. They took with them 70 camels for sacrifice. As the journey was a holy one, they went quite unarmed except for a sheathed sword which alone was permissible to the pilgrims. Thus prepared, the Prophet, accompanied by about 1400 Muslims, left Medina for Mecca in the month Zu'l-Qada, the 6th Hijra/February, 628. "Muhammad's march form Medina to Mecca," writes Gibbon, "displayed the peaceful and solemn pomp of a pilgrimage : seventy camels chosen and bedecked for sacrifice preceded the van; the sacred territory was respected and the captives were dismissed without ransom to proclaim his clemency and devotion."

But the Meccan pagans remained as adamant as ever to the Holy Prophet and Islam due to their undying hostility towards them. They regarded the Prophet's desire for pilgrimage as a subterfuge and his devotion to the House of Allah as a tactical move to lower their prestige in the eyes of the Arabian tribes by visiting them in their own city. Consequently when they heard of the approach of the Muslims, they prepared to resist their entry by force of arms. Thus they were ready to violate the ancient Arab customs about the santuary of Mecca and sanctity of the sacred months during which no bloodshed was permissible even in the darkest days of the Age of Ignorance. Besides, the pilgrimage to the Ka'ba was a privilege never denied even to the worst of enemies. But their inveterate hostility to Islam prompted the Quraysh to throw all these ancient traditions to the four winds. On hearing of the Muslims' approach, they bedecked themselves in leopard skins

and war-attire and moved out of Mecca along with their women and children. It was an indication of their intention to fight to the bitter end. They despatched a cavalry force under the command of Khalid bin Walid and Ikrima bin Abu Jahl to intercept the Prophet's advance.

When about two-days journey from Mecca, the Muslims met a small detachment of Khalid's cavalry. As the Prophet had no intention to fight, he left the main road and led the Muslims towards Mecca by a less-frequented lane. At last he reached a place, called Hudaybia, which was just within the sacred perimeter around Mecca and a day's journey from the city. There the camel of the Prophet stopped of her own account. On this the Prophet alighted, declaring that it was a sign from God to halt.

Negotiations. While the Prophet was encamped at Hudaybia, the Quraysh had pitched their tents at Zu Towa in martial array. But negotiations were opened. Budayl bin Waraqa, the Khuz'a Chief, was the first to approach the Prophet, partly to find out the Prophet's intentions and his forces and partly to warn him of the Qurayshite resolve to fight rather than allow him to enter Mecca. The Prophet told him that he had come not to fight but to visit the holy place. And in support of his intention he pointed out his pilgrim's garb and the sacrificial animals. The Bedouin Chief was impressed of the peaceful intentions of the Prophet. He reported the same to the Quraysh leaders. They were, however in no mood to accept his opinion. They next sent Orwa bin Masud, a chief of Taif and the father-in-law of Abu Sufiyan. He warned the Prophet not to provoke the Quraysh by forcing his way into Mecca, for the war-minded Quraysh would put his followers to flight if it came to fighting. Abu Bakr, who was present, remarked angrily, "No, never, none of us would leave Muhammad". Urwa also returned to Mecca to report failure. But he was deeply impressed of the Muslims' devotion, loyalty and reverence for the Prophet. "I have been to the courts of the Caesars and of the Chosroes," he said to the Quraysh, "but I have never seen such a devotion as Muhammad commands."

The Prophet then sent a messenger to Mecca, who was ill-treated by the Quraysh. The Prophet then asked Umar to go to the Quraysh. But he suggested the name of Uthman who had a powerful clan to protect him in the city. Thereupon Uthman was commissioned to negotiate with the Quraysh. When he entered Mecca, he met his cousin, Aban bin Said and put himself under his protection. He then went to the Quraysh leaders, who contrived to detain him for a long time.

The pledge of the Tree : Bay't ar-Rizwan. As Uthman did not

return for a long time, a rumour broke out in Muslim camp that he was killed by the Quraysh. This was a critical moment. The Muslims were practically unarmed and their number was small. Convinced of the Quraysh resolve to shed Muslim blood, the Prophet called upon his companions to take a pledge to fight unto death. This pledge was taken at the hand of the Prophet, while he stood under a tree. Hence it came to be known as the Bay't ar-Rizwan, the Pledge of the Tree or the Pledge of Good Pleasure. It was a manifestation of Muslims' determination to stand by the Prophet no matter what the Quraysh might do. Fortunately, Uthman returned soon after and negotiations began anew in right earnest.

The Treaty of Hudaybia concluded : This time the Quraysh leaders deputed Suhail bin Amr, one of their leaders, and other representatives to negotiate a treaty of peace. After a protracted conference a ten-years truce was concluded between the Prophet and Suhail, the Qurayshite plenipotentiary. But not without some hitches. The Prophet asked Hazrat Ali to write the terms of the treaty. When he commenced with the words : "*Bism Illah ar-Rehman*" — "In the name of God, the Most Gracious" - the Islamic way to begin something, Suhail objected and insisted that Ali should begin in the Qurayshite fashion with the words: "*Bism Allahumma*"—"In the name, O God". The Muslims murmured, but the Prophet yielded and asked Ali to write as Suhail wanted. When Ali next wrote : "This is the treaty between Muhammad Rasul Allah—the apostle of God," Suhail again protested loudly : "If accepted Muhammad as the Prophet of Allah, I would become a Muslim. You should simply write Muhammad, the son of Abdullah."

The Muslims murmured louder than before and refused to consent to the change. But the Prophet made a sign to them. They accepted his decision, and the work of writing the treaty was finally concluded. It was witnessed by Abu Bakr, Umar, Abdul Rahman, Sad bin Abi Waqqas, Uthman, Abu Ubayda and Muhammad bin Maslama (a Medinite Ansar) on the side of Muslims, and by Huvaytib bin Abdul Uzza and Mikraz bin Hafs, on the side of the Quraysh.

The Treaty of Hudaybiya: The text of the treaty was as follows:—

"In thy name, O God! This is the Treaty between Muhammad bin Abdullah and Suhail bin Amr. They have agreed not to resort to arms for a period of ten years. During this time each party shall be secure, and neither shall injure the other. Whoever wishes to enter into covenant and alliance with Muhammad can do so, and

whoever wishes to enter into covenant and alliance with the Quraysh can do so. If a Qurayshite comes to Muhammad without the permission of his guardian, Muhammad shall deliver him back to the Quraysh, but if one of the people of Muhammad comes to the Quraysh, he is not to be returned to Muhammad. This year Muhammad with his companions must withdraw and not enter Mecca against us, but next year he may come to Mecca with his followers and stay for three days, yet without other weapons than those of a traveller, the swords remaining in their sheath."

We may summarize the terms of the Treaty of Hudaybia thus:—

1. It was a truce between the Muslims and the Quraysh of Mecca for a period of ten years.

2. The Muslims should return this year to Medina without performing the pilgrimage. They might, however, come for pilgrimage next year, when they should stay in Mecca for three days.

3. Anyone of the Arab Tribes may enter into alliance or treaty with the Prophet. In the same way any tribe was free to ally itself to the Quraysh.

4. Anyone of the Quraysh who flees from Mecca to Medina shall be returned by the Prophet to the Quraysh, but any Muslim who flees to Mecca will not be restored by the Quraysh to the Muslims.

Disappointment among the Muslims: The Treaty was obviously unfavourable to the Muslims. Firstly, it required the Medina without performing the Umra or lesser pilgrimage which was the only purpose of their journey. Secondly, the clause which particularly incensed them was their unequal position regarding the repatriation of a Muslim who fled from Mecca and took refuge with the Muslims in Medina, while in a similar case the Muslims could not ask for the repatriation of one of them who would flee to the Quraysh.

Incident of Abu Jandal: As Fate would have it, an incident occured only a few moments after the treaty of Hudaybia was signed, which agitated and saddended the hearts of the Muslims. Abu Jandal, the son of the Qurayshite plenipotentiary, Suhail, was a Muslim. But he was still in Mecca, where he suffered terribly at the hands of his pagan relatives. However, he managed to escape from Mecca and rushed into the Muslim camp just at the time when the treaty was finalised. He desired to accompany the Muslims to Medina. On seeing him, his cruel father promptly demanded that the Prophet should hand over the lad to him in compliance

with the terms of the treaty. Abu Jandal earnestly appealed to the Muslims not to deliver him back into the hands of his tormentors. The hearts of the Muslims were deeply touched at the sight of his pitiable condition. He showed them the scars on the body inflicted by his torturers. The Prophet tried to get an exception in his case. But Suhail obstinately insisted that the treaty must be complied with at this very first test. The Prophet had to yield. He told Abu Jandal to return to Mecca. "Have patience Abu Jandal!" he said, "and put thy trust in Allah. He will show to thee and others like-minded with thee a way of deliverence." Abu Jandal was taken back in custody to Mecca.

Umar's Protestations: Already the Muslims had misgivings about the unequal terms of the Treaty of Hudaybia. They knew that the purpose of their journey was holy and peaceful. They also knew that they were not defeated in a fighting. They asked themselves that why should then they accept a treaty which favoured the Quraysh so much, especially when it entailed such heart-rending implications as shown by the incident of Abu Jandal. Umar expressed these misgivings and disappointments loudly. "Are you not the true Messenger of Allah?" he asked the Prophet. "Is not ours a righteous cause?" The Prophet replied, "Yes". "Why then", Umar asked further, "Why then should we suffer so much humiliation in the matter of faith?" The Prophet assured him that whatever he did was at the bidding of Allah. "Did you not tell us" added Umar. "that we shall perform the pilgrimage?" "But I never said," replied the Prophet, "that we shall do so this very year". Umar became silent but not convinced. The Prophet, joined by the Muslims, performed the rites of pilgrimage on the very spot they were encamped and then returned to Medina.

Consequences of the Treaty of Hudaybiya: (1) "A Clear Victory". The Prophet was right. The Treaty of Hudaybiya was apparently a humiliation but really a harbinger of Islamic victories to come. These victories were foretold by the Quran soon after. While yet on the way to Mecca, the Prophet received a Divine revelation: "Verily We have given unto thee a clear victory..." (Surah Al-Fath.) This shows that the Treaty of Hudaybiya was not a defeat but a victory in the eyes of God. The Prophet at once summoned Umar to recite him the revelation. On hearing it, Umar was filled with joy and his sense of frustration was gone. Soon the Surah Al-fath was on the lips of all Muslims and they were filled with exaltation at the tidings of new victories to come. The first of these victories was against the Jews of Khayber, which came only two months after the Treaty of Hudaybiya.

(2) **The settlement at Iyes**: The Quraysh had imposed an unjust and an unequal term of repatriations. Prophet had accepted it for he

rightly believed that Islam was so attractive to its converts as to restrain them from deserting their faith and co-religionists. Nevertheless, it was a harsh condition for those persons who were still in Mecca but had accepted Islam. They were cruelly treated by their heathen relatives and compatriots. One such Meccan was the young convert named Abu Basir. A little time after Hudaybiya, he managed to escape from the clutches of his persecutors and reached Medina. But two Qurayshites, including his master, reached Medina close upon his heels and demanded his restoration according to the terms of the treaty. Abu Basir remonstrated as Abu Jandal had before him. But the Prophet had pledged his word to the Quraysh and delivered Abu Basir to the Qurayshite envoys. On the way back, Abu Basir killed one of the two men, while the other took to his heels. Knowing that he would find no refuge in Medina, Abu Basir fled to the hilly tract on the Red Sea coast, called Iyes, on the coastal road to Syria. It soon became a sort of no man's land between Mecca and Medina. Soon as many as 70 converts fled from Mecca to Iyes and joined the little band of Abu Basir. They took to harassing and plundering the Meccan caravans trading with Syria.

This fact created a difficult situation for the Quraysh. They had accepted ten-year truce in the hope that their trade caravans could safely go by Medina to the north. Though the Muslim attacks on their caravans came to an end, yet the small band of Abu Basir became a new source of danger to the free flow of their trade. They were then forced to beg the Prophet to cancel the clause of extradition of the fugitives and enable the converts to re-join the Muslims in Medina. Thus one of the clauses of the Treaty of Hudaybiya, which rankled so bitterly in the hearts of the Muslims, was abrogated. The Iyes settlement then ended as these converts found the doors of Medina opened to them.

The Strategy of the Prophet : If we keep in mind the over-all situation in which the Prophet found himself *vis-a-vis* the Quraysh and the tribes of North Arabia, the treaty can well be described as a tactical retreat but a strategical victory. Though the Quraysh had suffered a defeat in the Battle of the Ditch, they were yet a power to reckon with. They still had a strong system of alliance with the Jews of Khayber and other Jewish settlements and with the Bedouin tribes of North Arabia, with Mecca as its centre. The seventeen expeditions, despatched against them after the Battle of the Ditch, could not shake this alliance system of the Quraysh.

By entering into the ten-year truce with the Quraysh the Prophet reaped several political and strategical advantages. First of all, Medina became an equal power with Mecca in the eyes of the whole

of Arabia. The Quraysh had now themselves recognised the Republic of Medina. Secondly, the Quraysh became neutral in the struggle between the Prophet, on the one side, and the Jews and the Bedouins on the other. In other words, the whole Meccan system of alliances now crumbled to pieces. Its place could now be taken by a new alliance-system, centred around Medina of the Prophet. Thirdly, the Jews of Khayber could now be punished for their treacherous dealings with the enemies of Islam. Fourthly, the Prophet now resolved to win the hearts of the Quraysh by peaceful relations with them rather than by inflicting defeat upon them, so that they would become his allies and supporters in the spread of Islam throughout the vast peninsula of Arabia. Fifthly, the treaty of Hudaybiya opened the door to his policy of unifying whole of Arabia under Islam. To this end the unification of the tribes of North Arabia was the first step, which could not be taken if the Quraysh of Mecca had remained hostile and war-like. In short, the Treaty of Hudaybiya finally placed Medina on the political map of Arabia and enabled it to become the nucleus of the first Islamic State in its history.

The Winds of Change over Arabia : That the Treaty of Hudaybiya was indeed a signal triumph of Islam, was amply illustrated by the spread of Islam among those tribes which had opposed it so fiercely before. In fact, far more people accepted Islam during the two years following this treaty than in six years preceding it. "There was no previous victory," writes Az-Zuhri "in Islam, greater than this. On all other occasions there was fighting : but here war was laid aside, tranquillity and peace restored ; the one party henceforth met and conversed freely with the other, and there was no man of sense or judgement amongst the idolaters who was not led thereby to join Islam. And truly in the two years that followed, as many persons entered the Faith as there belonged to it altogether before, or even a greater number." In fact, such celebrated names in the history of early Islam as Khalid bin Walid and Amr bin al-As, who had been so hostile to Islam, now adopted the Faith, and emigrated to Medina. Their conversion was an ample proof that Islam was now victoriously established in Arabia. Ibn Hisham, the earliest biographer of the Holy Prophet aptly remarks, "And the proof of this is that, whereas Muhammad went forth to Al-Hudaybiya with only fifteen hundred men, he was followed two years later, in the attack on Mecca, by ten thousand."

Banu Bakr and Banu Khuza'a. The truce of Hudaybiya lasted only for two years. It was due to the violation of its clause by Banu Bakr. This tribe allied itself to the Quraysh in accordance with the terms of the treaty, while Banu Khuza'a, their neighbouring tribe, became the allies of the Holy Prophet. We shall deal with the quarrel between these two tribes in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 8

UNIFICATION OF NORTH ARABIA

Holy Prophet had concluded the Treaty of Hudaybia with a view to have a free hand for his plan to unify the Arab tribes of North Arabia, under his political and spiritual leadership, consolidate Islamic State and strengthen the Faith. We shall now describe how he achieved these aims.

Tribal system in North Arabia : North Arabia, including the southern region of the Desert of Syria and the deserts of Najd and Hijaz, was a meeting ground and even a melting-pot of races and religions. Two races, the Jews and Arabs and three religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Arab paganism were found there, with Islam, as the new ascendant faith. The Jews were scattered in various colonies along the routes leading from Medina to Syria. Some of these Jewish settlements were flourishing agricultural communities, such as those at Khaybar, Fadak etc. All of them were hostile to Islam and the Prophet.

Arab tribes were almost all nomadic tribes, except a few, which dwelt in the few towns, like Dumat-ul-Jandal, Ayala etc. The tribes along the Syrian borders were partly Christian and partly pagan, and in the pay of Byzantines, such as the Kalb, the Ghassan, etc. Owing to the political crisis which confronted the Byzantine Empire at that time, the loyalty of these border tribes was somewhat shaken. However, when Emperor Heraclius restored Byzantine rule in Syria in 629, the Arab Tribes on the borders of Syria tended to return to their former allegiance to the Byzantine Empire. It was at this stage that the rising power of Islam reached these tribes. The Prophet had a plan to wean them from their former allegiance and faith and to unite them with the new Islamic State of Medina.

South of the Christian tribes, and much nearer home were a dozen or more of the pagan tribes of North Arabia. They were the Ghatafan who dwelt between Khaybar and Medina, Banu Tayyi, Ashja, Fezara, and Asad who dwelt to the east of Medina. Sulaym and Hawazin who dwelt between Medina and Mecca and even to the south of Mecca, the Jubaynah, Muzaynah. Daws, Kinanah, etc. who dwelt to the west of Medina along the route to Syria. There were a still larger number of smaller tribes, usually the off-shoots of the bigger ones mentioned before, such as the Murrah, the Thalabah, the Abs, which were the branches of the

Ghatafan. Most of these tribes were the politico-commercial allies of the Quraysh. They were always really to invade Medina when bribed by the Quraysh or by the Jews of Khayber to do so. They feared the rising power of the Prophet and were irked by the moral and financial obligations of Islam. Several of them, as for example, the Ghatafan, the Fezarah, Banu Sulaym and Mustaliq, had allied themselves with the Quraysh in the Battle of the Ditch and laid seige to Medina. But this was the high level mark of their aggression against Medina, after which the counter-offensive of Islam began. With a view to this counter-attack the Prophet had concluded ten-years truce with the Quraysh.

The Tribal Policy of the Prophet. The Treaty of Hudaybiya was a masterpiece of the statesmanship of the Prophet, for it neutralised the Quraysh and thus deprived the tribes of North Arabia of their mainstay. But the Jews of Khaybar were their second support. While returning from Hudaybiya to Medina, the Holy Prophet had conceived a plan to scotch the Jewish intrigues among the Arab tribes. This was the first step in his policy of unifying all the Arab tribes of North Arabia under him. However, the Prophet was a profoundly practical statesman. He knew that his policy could only succeed gradually. Hence he adopted a great variety of relationships with these tribes depending upon the position, power and remoteness from Medina of each one of them. Broadly speaking, his policy had two aims. His first aim was the complete Islamization of a tribe, that is, its adoption of Islam *in toto*. And if it was not feasible, the tribe must be brought within the fold of *Pax Islamica* or the Islamic State System by accepting the conditions to pay Jizya, to remain peaceful and by breaking off relations with foreign powers like the Byzantine or with the enemies of Islam. This was the minimum objective of his policy of unifying the Arab tribes. But it served as a stepping-stone to the ultimate goal of complete Islamization of the whole of Arabia. The Holy Prophet did not live long after the Treaty of Hudaybiya to achieve his ultimate goal all over the vast Peninsula. Nevertheless, he attained complete success in it so far as Northern, Central and Southern Arabian regions were concerned. Only the remote regions in the South and East Arabia and the northern fringes of the Syrian and Persian borderlands were not yet completely brought into the fold of Islam at the time of his death. This fact became one of the cause of the Apostasy Movement and of the foreign wars in the days of the first Caliph, Abu Bakr.

CONQUEST OF KHAYBER :

May—June, 628 A.D./7 A.H.

The Jews of Khayber : Khayber was a Jewish township nearly

seventy miles to the North of Medina, situated amidst a fertile valley. It was really a cluster of fortified villages, hence known as "Khayber" which meant "fortified". There were nearly twenty fortresses or strongholds, around which lay the farms and palm-grooves of the Jews. Among these fortresses the citadel of al-Qamus, situated in the heart of Khayber, was ruputed to be invulnerable. It was the seat of Kinana bin Abi'l Huqayq, who was the leading chief of the Jews of Khayber. They were joined by the Medinese Jewish tribe, Banu Nadir, after they were driven out from Medina in 625 A.D. The Jewish money and intrigues greatly contributed to the attack on Medina by the Quraysh and the Bedouin tribes of Najd in the Battle of the Ahzab or the Ditch. The hostile activities of the Jews of Khayber continued even after the ignominous failure of the Quraysh and their Bedouin Allies in this battle. So long as the Jews remained strong in Khayber it would be impossible to put an end their intrigues and influence over the tribes of North Arabia. This was the reason why the Prophet resolved to march on Khayber and scotch for good Jewish nest of intrigues and preparations for war against the young Republic of Islam.

March on Khayber : Nearly, two months after his return from Hudaybiya, the Prophet marched out of Medina at the head of a force which numbered about 1,600 men, including 200 horsemen. He did not at first disclose the direction in which he would march until he reached ar-Raji, a place between Medina and Khayber. He left a detachment at Raji to check the Bedouin tribes especially the Ghatafan from coming to the help of the Jews with whom they had an old alliance. These precautions were a complete success, for no Bedouin stirred at all to help the Jews. The Prophet then, by speedy marches, overtook the unwary Jews one day early morning when they were coming out of their strongholds into their fields and farms.

The Muslims attacked the Jews at once. The Jews precipately rushed into their strongholds, with their women, and treasures, and resolved to offer a stiff resistance. The Prophet directed his attack on those fortresses, which were either weak or indefensible. One by one several outlying strongholds fell into Muslim hands in a few days, till six strongholds remained unsubdued. They were the forts of Walih and Sulalim where, the Jews had shut up their property and families, the fort of Na'im, where they had deposited their treasures, the fort of Natat, where their warriors had taken shelter and, above all, al-Qamus, the strongest and most invulnerable of all their strongholds which was defended by their chief, Kinana bin Abi Huqayq. It took several weeks for the Muslims to reduce all these strongholds.

Capture of Al-Qamus. The strong fortress of al-Qamus, the citedel of Khayber was captured by the Muslims after several days of fierce struggle. Here the Jews had taken shelter under Kinana, their Chief, when they were defeated or driven out of all other fortresses and villages. The Prophet sent several of his companions against it one after the other but the defenders held their own. At last, on the third day he gave his black flag to Ali bin Abu Talib to lead the attack against the citadel. Ali advanced forward and after a brief struggle cut down the Jewish champions in single combats. After this a sharp conflict ensued, during which Ali displayed great feats of valour till al-Qamus was captured by him. The Jews lost 93 men, while the Muslims only 19 through the whole campaign. After this defeat, the citadel of al-Qamus surrendered. Kinana agreed to cease fighting on the condition that the Jews would be free to leave the country but would give up all their property to the Muslims. Kinana violated the terms of surrender by concealing his treasure, which was discovered. He was put to death for this breach of faith.

End of Jewish Resistance and the Feudal Settlement of the Jewish Colonies : The fall of al-Qamus broke the back of the Jewish resistance. Other strongholds, like al-Watih, Sulalim, etc., capitulated without much fighting. The terms of capitulation were established on feudal basis, that is, the Jews were left in possession of their lands, on the condition of paying half the produce to the Muslim owners, the 1600 conquerors or their successors. This impost was called the *Jizya*.

All other Jewish colonies in North Arabia, viz., Fadak, Wadi'l-Qara, Tayma, Ayala. etc., submitted on the same feudal terms of paying Jizya to the extent of half of their produce. Every year a Muslim appraiser, such as Abdallah bin Rawaha, visted the Jewish colonies and after fairly dividing the produce into two halves, left one part with the Jewish cultivators, while he carried the other to Medina. This source of income not only enhanced the economic prosperity of the Muslims but strengthened their military position also for subsequent struggles. Thus ended the Jewish peril in North Arabia. This arrangement lasted till the caliphate of Umar, who settled Muslim cultivators in place of the Jews.

Submission of the Arab tribes. The truce with the Quraysh and the final capitulation of the Jews hastened the unification of the Arab tribes under Medina. This process had really started much earlier, especially after the defeat of Ahzabs in the Battle of the Ditch. The very first Bedouin tribe to submit to the Prophet was Banu Ashja'. They sent a deputation to Medina soon after the Battle of the Ditch in which they had taken part on the side of the Quraysh. Indeed their Chief, Nu'ayn bin Masud, had become a

Muslim before the Battle of the Ditch, though he did not make it public. This enabled him to sow dissensions among the besiegers with whom he had a standing. After the siege of Medina was raised, Nu'aym bin Masud became the leader of his tribe's deputation to accept Islam on its behalf. Bani Ashja supplied contingent to the Muslim forces in the conquest of Mecca.

Next came the submission of several tribes. They were Banu Ashar from Jedda, Khushayn, Daws, etc. to the west of Medina who submitted to Islam during the campaign of Khayber. Several other tribes in the west of Medina, such as Juhaynah, Muzaynah, Aslam, Sad bin Bakr, etc., had already accepted Islam or allied themselves to Medina before the Treaty of Hudaybiya. A still larger number of the northern tribes came under the banner of Islam, in the 8th year of Hijrat, that is, a year after Hudaybiya and Khayber. They were Bani Thalaba, Bani Abd-al-Qais from Bahrain in eastern Arabia, Benu Judham, Abs. Murrah, Dhubiyan, Fezara, Ghatafan and Sulaym. Thus all the Arab tribes of Najd had accepted Islam before the fall of Mecca in the 8th year of Hijrah. These successes of Islam within two years of the Treaty of Hudaybiyya not only justified the Treaty but also account for the rapid spread of Islam after it. Moreover, these successes proved to be most enduring, for many of these tribes remained steadfast in their loyalty to Medina and in their support of Islam even in the dark days of the Apostasy after the Holy Prophet's death. Next to the Muhajreen and the Ansars, they became the most ardent supporters of Islam and the Islamic State of Medina.

The Prophet and the Christian Tribes : The Christian Tribes of the Arabs in the frontier regions of Syria and Iraq did not submit to the Holy Prophet so readily and whole-heartedly as did their pagan brethren to their south. Two reasons were responsible for their resistance, firstly their Christianity, and secondly their political allegiance to the Byzantine Empire which had by this time recovered its former hold on them after defeating the Persians in 628 A. D. For centuries past the Byzantine and Persian rulers had employed the border tribes as their mercenary soldiers to defend their borders against Arab marauders or raiders. In course of time these imperial powers created a number of vassal princedoms along their borders to act as buffer-states against the Bedouin incursions into their settled provinces. A chain of such tribal princedoms existed from Mutah in the west, Bostra in the north to Hira in the east on Persian border, inhabited by the Ghassan, the Taghlib, Tanukh and Lakhm tribes. To their south lay half Christian and half pagan tribes, like Banu Kalb, Bali, Qada'a, etc. Though some members of these tribes accepted Islam before the fall of Mecca, the majority of them, especially the Banu Ghassan and other northernmost tribes, remained hostile to the Prophet. They even joined hands

with the Byzantine rulers of Syria in order to oppose and if possible to crush the rising power of the Islamic State at Medina. News began to reach the Holy Prophet of the hostile concentration of the Christian tribes and Byzantine forces on the borders of Syria with a view to attack and destroy Medina. This led to the battle of Mutah.

The Battle of Mutah : September 629/8 A. H. Soon after his return from Hudaybiya the Holy Prophet sent message to the princes and rulers of Arabia and foreign lands, inviting them to accept Islam. A party of these missionaries was sent to the Ghassanid prince of Bostra, a vassal of the Byzantines. This party was almost all killed except one by the Chief of the tribe of Mutah on the borders of Syria, perhaps at the instigation of the Byzantine rulers. When the Prophet came to know of it, he despatched a a punitive force of 3,000 men against Mutah in September, 629 A. D. It was placed under the command of Zayd bin Haritha, the former servant of the Prophet and now cne of his most important companions. It was provided that if he fell on the battlefield, he was to be succeeded in command by Jafar bin Abu Talib, who had recently returned from Abyssinia and in case Jafar also fell, by Abdullah bin Rawaha.

When the Muslim force reached Mutah, they confronted a huge Christian army of the Greeks, the Syrians, and Arab tribes, numbering about 100,000 strong, brought together by Theodorus, brother of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius. Their huge numbers did not desist the Muslims from fighting. In this unequal struggle, however, the Muslim commanders Zayed bin Haritha, Jafar bin Abu Talib and Abdullah bin Rawaha, fell one after the other. In their predicament, the Muslims at last elected Khalid bin Walid to supreme command. Khalid successfully rallied the wavering Muslims around him and then safely drew them off from the battlefield and brought them to Medina. The reverse at Mutah, however, hindered for some time the process of unifying the Arab Tribes on the Syria border under the banner of Islam.

The Year of Message : The seventh year of Hijra is known as the Year of Messages. Indeed, the Treaty of Hudaybiya had offered a great opportunity to spread Islam in the lands beyond Arabia. Immediately on his return to Medina, the Prophet sent his emissaries into the four corners of the then known world bearing the Message of Islam with them. They were sent to (*i*) the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, (*ii*) Khusraw Parvez, the Sassaind King of Persia, (*iii*) Najashi or the Negus of Abyssinia, (*iv*) Muqaqis, the potentate of Egypt, (*v*) Harith, the King of Yemen, (*vi*) Harith, the Ghassanid Prince of Bostra, and to the lesser princes and tribes of Arabia.

These emissaries of peace and faith were received differently by the recipients of these messages. It is said that the Byzantine Emperor, recently victorious over his Persian foes, was well disposed toward the invitation to adopt Islam. But he desisted from doing so out of the fear of his powerful Christian bishops and clergy. He treated Dihyah Kalbi, the messenger, kindly and returned him with presents. Another Christian potentate, Muqaqis of Egypt, was also very much inclined towards Islam but declined to accept it. He too returned the messenger loaded with presents for the Holy Prophet, including two Coptic maids. One of them, named Mary, was married to the Prophet and bore him a son, named Ibrahim ,who, however, died in infancy. The third Christian ruler, the Negus of Abyssinia, was still more favourably inclined towards Islam. He professed to become a Muslim and sent costly presents to the Prophet. He also allowed the Muslims to return to Medina who had emigrated to Abyssinia in the dark days of the Qurayshite persecutions. Thus all the Muslims, except one or two, rejoined their brethern in Medina. Among them was Jafar bin Abu Talib, the cousin of the Prophet and brother of Hazrat Ali. He died in the battle of Mutah later.

All the messengers, however, were not kindly received. Abdullah bin Huzafah was sent to Khusraw Parvez, the King of Persia. The proud Persian Ruler burst out with anger when he saw the name of Allah and Mohammad (Sm) at the top of the letter instead of his name. He tore the letter to pieces. The messenger returned to Medina and reported the failure of his mission and the tearing of the prophetic letter. On hearing this the Prophet said, "God has also torn the empire of the Chosroes to pieces". Moreover, in his fit of anger, the Persian King ordered the Governor of Yeman, then a Persian possession, to arrest the Prophet. But when the Governor's men reached Medina to carry out the Imperial behest, they were told by the Prophet that their King was dead. The Governor, named Bazan, was so impressed by this news that he accepted Islam and Yeman threw off the yoke of Persian domination.

Another messenger, Harith bin Umayr, met with a more cruel fate. He was despatched with a message for the Christian Arab Prince of Bostra named Shurahbil bin Amr. While at Mutah, the messenger was killed by the Ghassanids. His death revealed the hostile intentions of the Christian Princes on the borders of Syria, which led to the battle of Mutah and its tragic results, as we have described above.

The messages of Islam which the Prophet despatched during, the Seventh Year of Hijra did not bear fruits immediately. But they indicated two important results for the future. Firstly, they showed clearly that the Message of Islam was not for Arabia alone,

but for the whole world. Secondly they indicated the direction in which Islam was to spread in subsequent ages.

Pilgrimage to Mecca. After a year of the Treaty of Hudaybiya, the month of pilgrimage arrived. This time the Prophet could visit Mecca peacefully. Accordingly he left Medina for Mecca, in February, 629/7 A. H., accompanied by 2000 Muslims. They were all attired in the simple garb of pilgrims, armed with a solitary but sheathed sword. When they approached Mecca, the Quraysh evacuated the city *en masse*, and encamped with their women and children on the hills around Mecca, leaving it to the Prophet and the Muslims for three days in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Hudaybiya. The Prophet, followed by the Muslims performed all the rites of pilgrimage and circumambulated the Ka'ba. The peaceful and dignified conduct of the Muslims during their sojourn in Mecca deeply impressed many Qurayshite who viewed them with eager and wonder-struck eyes from the hill-tops. On the fourth day, the Qurayshite messengers, Suhayl and Huvaytib, reminded the Prophet that the term of his stay in Mecca was over. The Prophet and the Muslims returned to Medina.

The Prophet's visit to Mecca was not only a fulfilment of a vow but a moral victory over the Quraysh. The dignified and noble conduct of the Muslim pilgrims convinced many Qurayshites of the truth of Islam. They thought of it now as a great boon for the Quraysh themselves. This change of opinion was soon reflected in the acceptance and migration of such veteran leaders of the Quraysh as Khalid bin Walid and Amr ibn al-As. They professed Islam and migrated to Medina where they joined the ranks of the Muslim warriors. Even those who stayed back in Mecca, like Abu Sufyan, were now convinced of the futility and folly of opposing the Prophet and Islam. But their pride and greed prevented them from following the path shown by Khalid bin Walid and Amr ibn al-As. Nevertheless, the softening of their hostility revealed the fact that Mecca was now ripe to fall into fold of Islam.

CHAPTER 9

THE FALL OF MECCA

Two years had passed since the signing of the Treaty of Hudaybiya. The truce was yet to last for another eight years. But the Quraysh leaders as usual became restless and apprehensive of it. The defeat of the Muslims in the battle at Mutah encouraged them once again assume a more hostile attitude towards the Prophet. Banu Bakr had become their allies in accordance with the terms of the Treaty. The Quraysh encouraged them to attack Banu Khuza'a, a neighbouring tribe, which was allied to the Prophet in the same manner. The two tribes were old rivals. Encouraged by the Quraysh, one night Banu Bakr fell upon Banu Khuza'a, who fled into the sanctuary of Ka'ba. There several of them were killed by Banu Bakr, thus violating the ancient custom which prohibited bloodshed within the sacred precincts of the Ka'ba. Upon this the chief of Banu Khuza'a, with a party of forty men, hurried to Medina to inform the Prophet of the breach of the Treaty and seek his help against their enemies.

Disputes among the Quraysh. The Quraysh leadership was in a critical state at this time. As usual they were split into two groups *vis.*, Umayyad group, led by Abu Sufyan and Makhzam group, led by Ikrimah, the son of Abu Jahl. After the battle of the Ditch, the leadership of the Quraysh tended to shift from the hands of Abu Sufyan, who had acquired it since Badr, back into the hands of the Makhzam group, which had now again become quite influential in Mecca. This group comprised Ikrimah bin Abu Jahl, Hubayrah bin Abi Wahb, Harith bin Hisham, and Abdullah in Abi Rabiyah, all of the Banu Makhzum clan, and of such other leaders of other Qurayshite clans as Suhayl bin Amr and Huvaytib (both of the Amir clan) and Safwan bin Umayya. All of them were rich merchants. They were resentful of the increasing influence and power of the Holy Prophet in the north and were eager to find some opportunity to shatter it. They also regarded with apprehension the blockade of their trade by Abu Basir's band on the Syrian route. Emboldened by the Muslim's defeat at Mutah, they secretly incited Banu Bakr to murder some men of Banu Khuza'a. They had the hope that Banu Bakr would counterbalance the threat of Abu Basir's party and force the Prophet to come to some terms with the Quraysh about him.

But there was no unanimity of opinion or policy among the Quraysh leaders. While Ikrimah, Safwan and Suhayl were bent

upon tearing the Treaty to pieces and provoking a war with the Prophet, others like Abu Sufyan, wese against it. They disapproved of the attack on Banu Khuza'a, which was organised by their more aggressive compatriots.

Predicament of the Quraysh leadership: The Quraysh leaders soon realised that the matter was serious. The Prophet was not so weak as he was a few years ago. He was now a power to be respected. They had either to submit to him or to accept the conditions he would impose upon them. The Prophet informed them that they might accept any one of the three conditions :—(I) to pay blood-money to the families of the murdered men of Banu Khuza'a: (ii) to leave Banu Bakr unpertected so that they be punished by him for their misdeed; or (iii) to declare that the Teaty was violated by them and therefore dissolved. These demands put the Quraysh leadership on the horns of a dilemma. They were in a predicament. They were unwilling to pay blood-money, for it would have lowered their prestige in the eyes of all Arabs. For the same reason they could not leave their allies, Banu Bakr, unprotected and unaided by them. But to declare that the Treaty was no longer binding, was also too perilous to accept. They realised that they were now no match for the Prophet. Finding no way out of their delimma they decided to send Abu Sufyan to Medina to settle this affair as best as he could.

On reaching Medina, Abu Sufyan first visited his daughter, Um Habibah, one of the wives of the Holy Prophet. But she refused to have anything to do with him. He then successively went to Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali. But they all expressed their inability to intercede on his behalf. Finding no means of access to the Prophet, Abu Sufyan stood in the Court of the Mosque of the Holy Prophet and shouted that the Quraysh would guarantee peace and protection to all—the Arab fashion of accepting a compromise in a dispute. But the Prophet rejected this offer. So Abu Sufyan returned without any guarantee from Medina and reported the failure of his mission to the Quraysh. They at once realised that they were in a perilous situation. But they still did not know what to do. Though the aggressive Makhzum group was eager for a fight, the majority of the Quraysh leadership was fully aware of its helpless position. Abu Sufyan was now convinced that the old game was over. Submission to Muhammad (Sm) would alone save him as well as Mecca. Al-Abbas kept the Prophet informed of the Qurayshite hesitancy, helplessness and dissensions.

The Prophet marches on Mecca: January, 630/Ramzan, 8 A.H. The Prophet had already resolved to march on Mecca and to put an end to the Qurayshite mischief-mongering for good. But he did not disclose his intentions, even to his closest associates, lest the

Quraysh might come to know of his moves. Soon after Abu Sufyan's departure, he sent messengers to all his Bedouin allies to join him either at Medina or on the route to Mecca. One of the men of the Muhajireen, named Hatib bin Abi Balta' secretly sent a letter to his relatives in Mecca, informing them of Prophet's intentions to attack the City. But the Prophet was informed of it and the letter was recovered from its bearer after a pursuit. These precautions kept the Quraysh quite unaware of the intentions and movements of the Muslims.

On January 1, 630 A. D., the Holy Prophet left Medina for Mecca. On this occasion he led ten thousand warriors—the largest force he had led. Besides the contingents of the Muhajreen and Ansars, it included troops of several Bedouin tribes of North Arabia. Muzaynah and Sulaym provided 1000 soldiers each. Banu Aslam and Ghifar sent 400 men each, while Juhaynah, Ashja, Khuza'a Zamrah, Layth and Sa'd bin Bakr joined the Prophet in unspecified numbers on the road to Mecca at the points where they had their settlements. In due course the Muslim force arrived at Marr az-Zahran, a place at a distance of two days' journey from Mecca.

The Prophet at Marr az-Zahran : The Quraysh were taken by surprise, for they were quite unaware of the Muslim advance so close to their city. They came to know of it only when they saw ten thousand fires burnt on the hills to the north-west of Mecca. The Prophet had ordered every one of his soldiers to light a fire. The sight of so many fires burning at night magnified the size of the Muslim army in the eyes of the Quraysh. A wave of despondency swept over them. Though the aggressive Makhzum group was still bent upon a war course, the large majority of the Quraysh believed it to be utter madness to fight such a large army. The Qurayshite will to fight had evaporated. At this critical moment Abu Sufyan decided to submit to the Prophet. With this intention he hurried to the Muslim camp in the darkness of night.

Abu Sufyan's Submission; When Abu Sufyan reached near the Muslim camp, he met Al-Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet, who had already accepted Islam. Whether this meeting was by accident or by design, we cannot say with any certainty. But it proved to be most fortunate for Abu Sufyan, for Al-Abbas conducted him safely to the Prophet. Otherwise he might have been killed by the Muslims who had long suffered at his hands. Brought before the Prophet, he professed Islam, though after some hesitation.

The time was, indeed, most critical. Abu Sufyan had at last long acknowledged Islam, but the Quraysh had not. The Holy Prophet hated the very idea of shedding their blood, though their

hesitancy and obstinacy might bring this disaster upon them. He then decided to offer them one more chance to escape from their evil fate which their own folly had brought upon them. He ordered Abu Sufyan to hurry back to Mecca early next morning and proclaim that those who would take shelter in Abu Sufyan's house or would stay quietly in their own houses or take shelter in the holy santuary of the Ka'ba would not be molested at all. Abu Sufyan at once repaired to Mecca and told the people of the safety guaranteed by the Prophet. He also informed them that the Prophet had brought a large army against which all resistance would be futile.

The Prophet enters Mecca : 11 February, 630 : After Abu Sufyan's departure, the Prophet marshalled his army in their tribal formations. They were divided into four columns. Each column was assigned a specified part of Mecca to capture. The first column under the Prophet himself was to advance upon Mecca from the northern route, leading from Marr as Zahran. It was to be preceded by a second column under Abu Ubaydah ibn al Jarah. They were to reach the upper quarters of the city. The third column under the command of Sa'd bin Ubadah was to advance from the western direction through the narrow passage between the two hills of Jabal Hind over-hanging Mecca. This column was to take central quarters of the City. The fourth column, commanded by Khalid bin Walid, was to advance upon the lower parts of Mecca, inhabited by the people of the aggressive Makhzum group, where the danger of resistance and fighting was anticipated. This column was to advance upon the city from the southern route. The Prophet once again displayed his superb generalship. He so arranged his forces that if there were opposition in any part of Mecca against a column, the enemy could be attacked by other the columns in the rear. This military disposition, coupled with the psychological victory, which the Prophet had already won over the Quraysh, ensured a complete and almost bloodless triumph over them.

The Bloodless Occupation of Mecca : Before the Muslim soldiers were ordered to march into Mecca, the Prophet had strictly instructed them to avoid shedding blood as much as possible. They were to resort to arms only when absolutely unavoidable. "Express orders were given," writes Washington Irving, "to all generals to practice forbearance and in no instance to make the first attack ; for it was the earnest desire of Muhammad (Sm) to win Mecca by moderation and clemency, rather than subdue it by violence." There was an excellent arrangement for informing the Prophet of what was happening in different colums at the time of their attack. If he found any commander disregarding his instructions, he took prompt action. For instance, he was reported that Sa'd bin Ubaydah, the commander of the central column had uttered words

threatening that "today is the day of slaughter ; there is no safety this day for Mecca." On hearing these words, the Prophet at once went to Sa'd bin Ubaydah, took the banner from his hands and gave it to his son, Qays bin Sa'd, a brave but mild commander.

All the columns entered Mecca without meeting any resistance from the Quraysh except that of Khalid bin Walid. He had advanced from the south against Lower Mecca, which was inhabited by the die-hards of the Makhzum group, namely Ikrimah bin Abu Jahl, Safwan bin Umayyah, Suhayl bin Amr and the men of Banu Bakr. They were all deeply implicated in the attack on Banu Khuza'a and were eager to fight the Muslims. When Khalid's column appeared within an arrow-shot, they showered arrows and other missiles upon it. But Khalid was ready for such a reception. He plunged his men into the quarters of the enemy and chased them through the streets of Mecca. Before order could be restored some blood was shed. The leaders escaped, but nearly thirteen of the Qurayshites lay dead, while the Muslims lost two. At this very moment, the Prophet, having seen fighting from the other end of the the city, promptly ordered Khalid to desist fighting. Further bloodshed stopped completely. Being informed that the Qurayshites had themselves initiated fighting, the Prophet accepted Khalid's action as unavoidable.

General amnesty proclaimed : Mecca was conquered. The Quraysh had been subdued. It was indeed an unconditional surrender. What a moment for Holy Prophet and the Muslims, who had suffered cruelly at the hands of these Qurayshites for twenty long years ! Had there been a mundane conqueror, he would have satiated his pent-up passions of revenge and arrogance by unleashing on orgy of endless slaughter, rapine and loot, and thus turned Mecca into shambles of death and destruction. But not so the Holy Prophet. He entered Mecca at the head of a victorious army, but he proclaimed peace and general amnesty. He did not shout with martial joy, but bowed his head in humble thanks-giving. As Ibn Hisham, one of his earliest biographers, puts it, "The Prophet entered into Mecca shyly, prostrating himself repeatedly on the very back of the camel he was riding, before the One God, thankful to Him for all He had vouchsafed." As Tabari, referring to a Hadith, says, "It was destined for Muhammad (Sm), the "Prophet of War," to demonstrate that even in his battle he was the "Prophet of Mercy."

"Truth has come and Falsehood has vanished" : The moment the Prophet stepped onto the soil of Mecca, which now lay prostrate at his feet, he did not give vent to any emotions of revenge or arrogance. He went straight to the Ka'ba and performed the rite of Twaf around it. Then he summoned Uthman bin Talha of the

Abd ad-Dar clan, the ancient key-bearers of the Ka'ba. Its door was opened and the Prophet prayed inside it. Then he purified it of the idols by striking each of them down with his staff, and recit- this verse of the Quran : "Say, the Truth has come and Falsehood has vanished. Surely, falsehood is bound to vanish". (Surah XV 81). Afterwards he returned the keys to Uthman bin Talha and appointed him and his descendants as the custodians of Ka'ba.

Submission of the Quraysh to the Prophet : A general amnesty was proclaimed throughout Mecca. A few of their leaders took shelter in their houses, others fled from the city. But they were not pursued by the victorious Muslims. The Prophet then assembled the Quraysh near Mount Safa and delivered a sermon. At the end of it he asked them. "Do you know what punishment I am going to give you ?" The Quraysh knew well how cruelly they had treat- ed him for two decades and expected a harsh treatment. Yet they cried, "Thou art a noble brother and the son of a noble brother." And the Prophet said, "No blame on you be this day. Go, you are free." The Quraysh were dumbfounded. Even in their wildest dreams they never expected to escape so lightly. The magnanimity and mercy of the Prophet captivated their hearts. Even the bitterest enemy among them was convinced of the supreme moral virtues of Islam. The Truth of Islam went deep into their hearts.This was the real conquest of Mecca : it was the conquest of hearts not of arms. At this moment mass conversions began. The whole multitudes of Mecca rushed towards the Prophet to accept Islam at his hands. The Prophet received them at Safa.

Some of the scenes of submission and conversion are worth mentioning. The fearless Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan, once the arch-enemy of the Prophet, was no less bitter opponent of Islam than her husband. But after hearing of general amnesty and the magnanimous pardon by the Prophet, she first broke to pieces the idols in her house. Then she repaired to Mount Safa in the company of other females to accept Islam. As usual the Prophet took several vows from her. But Hind was outspoken even on this occasion, which bespoke more of the Prophet's meekness in victory, his magnanimity towards a bitter foe of old, than the frank impudence of Hind.

When administering the oath of Islam, he asked Hind, "Do you promise not to kill your infants ?"

"We had reared them as children." She replied. "It was you who killed them in the battle of Badr !"

"Do you promise not to commit fornication or adultery ?"

"Can a free-born woman do that ?"

"Do you promise not to steal ?"

At this Hind replied almost jocularly, "O Messenger of God ! stealing is really bad. But just think, my husband is very miserly and in order to maintain the house I have stolen from time to time some money from him." The Prophet could not help smiling and said, "All right, that much is not forbidden." Thus Hind, who had barbarously mutilated Hamza, one of the dearest uncles of the Prophet, was forgiven and taken into the fold of Islam.

Other mortal enemies were similarly forgiven the past misdeeds and welcomed into the fold of Islam. After their defeat at the hands of Khalid's column, Ikrimah had fled towards the Red Sea with the intention of fleeing across to Abyssinia. But his wife had accepted Islam and implored the Prophet to grant pardon to her husband, which he promptly did. After securing his pardon, she rushed to the coast and reached him just at the time when he was about to take to a ship. She brought him back to Mecca, where he became a Muslim. Suhayl bin Amr submitted through his son Huwaytib who had also submitted through Abu Dharr al-Ghifari. Safwan bin Umayya asked for two months' time to submit. The Prophet granted him four months. Indeed the Prophet did not compel anyone to accept Islam, but granted security and protection to all.

Only ten persons were proscribed to death. But out of them only four were actually put to death, not for political reason but for apostatising and satirizing the Prophet and the Muslims. Of all the leaders of the Quraysh, only one man, named Hubayrah bin Abi Wahb, never submitted to the Prophet and never became a Muslim. He was a Makhzumi. After the fall of Mecca, he fled to the high lands of Yeman, where he lived till his dying day.

Thus were the foes of yore, with very few exceptions, won over to Islam.

The Destruction of the Idols outside Mecca: After the submission of Mecca, the Holy Prophet despatched parties to destroy idols in the neighbourhood of Mecca. Khalid bin Walid demolished the temple of Uzza at Nakhla. Amr ibn al-As broke into pieces Suwa, the idol-god of Banu Hudhayl. A party of the Ansars destroyed the image of Manat at Mashallal (between Medina and Mecca).

Arrangements at Mecca: The Prophet stayed at Mecca for about twenty days. His magnanimous treatment of the Meccans

excited apprehension in the hearts of the Ansars of Medina that perhaps the Prophet would make his native city his home once again. But the Prophet soon allayed their fears. He declared that he would never quit Medina. "God forbid it", he said, "where you live, there will I live, and there too shall I die". He then made final arrangements for the administration of Mecca. He defined the boundaries of the sanctuary or "Haram" of Mecca, by erecting pillars of stones at proper places. Most of the old offices and privileges of the Quraysh were abolished. But Uthman bin Talha of Abd ad-Dar retained the custody of the Ka'ba, and al-Abbas the right of "Saqayah" or supplying water to the pilgrims.

Significance and Importance of the Conquest of Mecca. Thus Mecca was conquered. It was a conquest not only due to the superb generalship of the Prophet, but above all due to his sublime character, his tact, diplomacy and administrative skill. "The magnanimity" writes Sir William Muir "with which Mohammad treated a people who had so long hated and rejected him is worthy of all admiration. It was indeed for his own interest to forgive the past, and cast into oblivion its slights and injuries. But this did not the less require a large and generous heart." Though the weakness and dissensions among his Qurayshite foes also enabled the Prophet to win a victory over them, and though his victory was also due to his statesmanship as the Head of the new Islamic State of Medina which now ruled supreme over the loyal tribes of North Arabia, nevertheless the causes of his victory lay in the Prophet's deep faith in his Mission and his profound trust in God, his supreme confidence in his cause and his far-seeing wisdom. These were the reasons which explain the great achievement of the Prophet—his victory over his inveterate enemies who had persecuted him cruelly, drove him out of his native city and even then left no stone unturned in order to encompass his destruction.

But the fall of Mecca was not only a sublime end of a great struggle; it was also the beginning of a still greater goal, namely, the unification of whole Arabia under the Prophet and Islam. The erstwhile foes of the Prophet henceforth became one of his most trusted allies in the supreme task of the Islamization of all Arabia. The whole city of Mecca now espoused his cause, with a wholehearted devotion. "There were", as Sir William Muir remarks, "no disaffected inhabitants at Mecca nor any relapse even in the rebellion that followed the Prophet's death. Within a few weeks we find two thousand of the citizens fighting faithfully by his side." The administrative skill, martial spirit and leadership of the Quraysh and their unflinching loyalty and devotion to the Prophet and Islam became the most powerful forces in the building of the new Islamic Republic of Arabia before and after the death of the Holy Prophet. And it was all due to the far-seeing wisdom of the Holy Prophet,

his profound insight into the character of the Quraysh, and his forgiving and magnanimous heart.

In short, the conquest of Mecca opened the way to the general spread of Islam thoughout the Arabian Peninsula. The reason for it was quite simple. "The Arabs", as Imam Bukhari writes, "were waiting for the Quraysh to become Muslims. They used to say, Let him (Muhammad) settle it with his people (the Quraysh) alone. If he wins, he is surely a true Prophet". So when Mecca was conquered, all the Arabs hastened to become Muslims. The possession of Mecca enhanced the spiritual position of the Prophet, which, in its turn, increased his political power.

CHAPTER 10

UNIFICATION OF ARABIA

The conquest of Mecca ushered in a new era in Islam. It opened the way to the progress and supremacy of Islam in Central and Southern Arabia, and such other remote corners of Arabia which were still untouched by Islamic influence. So long as the Quraysh of Mecca remained hostile to Medina, it was not possible for the Prophet to extend his influence to the south of Mecca. But with its conquest, the road to the South was opened.

Tribal System in Central and Southern Arabia. The tribes dwelling in Central, Southern and Eastern Arabia were in some respects different from those of Northern Arabia. They were under the influence of Persia, while those of Northern Arabia were under that of the Byzantine Empire. But the Persian Empire was, at this time, in a process of decay and disintegration. The last powerful King of Persia, Khusraw Parvez, was killed by his son, Siroes, in 628. Soon after this he put to death his eighteen brothers. Within three months of these cruel acts he also died. Weak successors came to the throne of the Chosroes, which weakened Persian hold on its distant provinces and possessions, like Yemen in South Arabia. This is the reason why Islamic influence superseded Persian influence in these regions and Islam spread rapidly among them.

The tribes of Central and Southern Arabia were almost equally divided into Christian and idolatrous clans. Moreover, they were also divided into nomadic and settled clans. Many of the clans of the nomadic tribes were devoted to agriculture and settled life. Towns and village were found in far greater number in these regions than in Northern Arabia. The influence and power of the tribal chiefs was more conspicuous and decisive and tended to be hereditary. Hence the conversion of a tribal 'deputation' in Medina often led to the adoption of Islam or of Islamic obligations by the whole tribe on its return. The great distance between Medina and these tribes also necessitated the institution of a rudimentary administrative machinery among them. The Holy Prophet sent 'teachers' of Islam, tax-collectors, 'governors' and judges to many a tribe of the South. Nevertheless, geographical distance also inclined these tribes to assume a more independent attitude towards Medina after the death of the Holy Prophet.

War with the Hawazin

Hawazin.

To the south-east of Mecca amidst many hills and valleys of Central Arabia, dwelt the great Hawazin tribe. It was mainly a nomadic and pastoral tribe. But some of its clans, like the Thaqifs of Taif, were town-dwelling agriculturists. In fact, Taif was the centre of their power and religion which consisted of worshipping their special tribal deity, *al-Lat* the Mother-Goddess of fertility. Taif had a temple of this goddess——one of the few temples in the whole of the idolatrous Peninsula. The Hawazin, including the Thaqif, were a war-like tribe, rich and powerful in numbers. They were, indeed, the old rivals and even enemies of the Quraysh of Mecca. The Hawazin, unlike the Quraysh, looked to Persia and sought to establish trade relations with Iraq, then a Persian province. A war broke out between the two rivals during 590-95 A.D. known as by War of Fijar, in which the Quraysh defeated the Howazin and thereby disrupted their attempt to divert the Arabian trade towards Iraq. Even the city of Taif of the Thaqif, already important trading centre, came under the control of the Quraysh merchants, especially of the rich Banu Umayya who established close matrimonial and commercial relations with them. The rise of Islam proved to be a commercial boon for the Hawazin, for the attention and energies of the Quraysh were diverted towards the great struggle against the Prophet and Medina. At the same time, the Persian Empire had won a victory over their Byzantine rivals, which enhanced Persian influence in Eastern and Central Arabia. The Hawazin established their trade with the Persian Empire.

However, the successes of the Holy Prophet against his Quraysh enemies disquieted the Hawazin no less than other pagan tribes of Central Arabia. They regarded his successes as a threat to their pagan religion and their economic interests. When they heard of the Prophet's march on Mecca they decided not to remain mere spectators. They could not, however, anticipate that the Quraysh would submit to the Prophet without fighting. On the contrary, they expected a hard and prolonged struggle between the two, which would weaken both the combatants. They planned then to strike a blow against one or both of them. In the way they hoped to destroy the power of the Quraysh, their age-old commercial rivals, on the one hand and that of the Holy Prophet, who threatened their pagan way of life, on the other. This was the reason why they prepared for a war at the very time the Prophet marched on Mecca. But its outcome turned out to be quite different from what they had expected.

The Hawazin advance towards Mecca. The surrender of the Quraysh provoked the Hawazin to hurry with their warlike plans. Their leaders, headed by a youthful chief named Malik bin Auf, decided to assemble all the various clans and branches of their vast tribe, in the valley of Autas, to the north-east of Mecca. They mustered a great force of 20,000 warriors. On the suggestion of their chief, Malik bin Auf, they took with them their women and children so that the warriors might fight all the more courageously and stoutly. So the Holy Prophet faced a more powerful enemy, the Hawazin and Thaqif, desperately resolved to defeat him.

The Prophet heard of the hostile gathering of the Hawazin at Autas a few days after the submission of Mecca. After making necessary preparations, such as appointing Attab bin Usayd as its governor, he left the city with 12,000 men. They included 10,000 Muslims who accompanied him from Medina, and 2000 Qurayshites, who had now joined him as volunteers. His erstwhile adversaries, like Abu Sufyan, also joined the Muslim army, while such wealthy leaders of the Quraysh as Safwan bin Umayya, supplied money and weapons to the Prophet's soldiers. Never before the Muslims were so great in numbers and so well-equipped in the sinews of war as on this occasion. Even a devout man, like Abu Bakr, was so pleased with the Muslim out-fit that he remarked: "This time we are more numerous than the enemy. We shall not be defeated this time for smallness of our numbers". Leaving Mecca early in the morning of 27th January, 630 A.D., the Muslims reached the narrow pass of Hunayn in the evening of the 30th January. There they encamped for the night.

Battle of Hunyan : 31st January, 630 A.D. The Hawazin were skilled in archery and their leaders selected a place which was quite suitable for this method of warfare, Malik bin Awf posted his archers on the hills on both sides of the narrow pass and awaited the Muslims' entry into the valley. Early next day, on the 31st January, 630, as it was customary with the Holy Prophet, he marshalled his army in battle array before the sun had risen. He then ordered it to enter the arrow pass, quite unaware of the enemy hidden on the hill tops. The day was cloudy, dark and misty. The vanguard, consisting of the Banu Sulaym, commanded by Khalid bin Walid, advanced into the valley. It was followed by the main army, with the rear under the Holy Prophet, accompanied by Al-Abbas and other companions. No sooner did the Muslims enter the narrow pass than the enemy rushed upon them furiously. Taken quite unaware, column after down column of the Muslims retreated in confusion before the furious onslaught. The narrowness of the pass, the lingering darkness of the cloudy dawn and the utter unexpectedness of the enemy attack, turned confusion into panic,

The Muslims, headed by the new Qurayshite converts, took to flight past the Holy Prophet. At last he and a few of his companions and relatives, like Abu Bakr, Umar, and al-Abbas, were left on the battlefield. The enemy descended from the hills and advanced on the little band of the Holy Prophet, which placed them in danger of annihilation. But the Prophet stuck steadfastly to his dangerous post with marvellous equanimity. He shouted to the fleeing Muslims "Where are you running? The Prophet of Allah is here. Return." Al-Abbas, with his powerful voice also called out, "O Ansars! O Companions of the Bayt-ur Rizwan! O Men of the Surat al-Baqara: Rally around the Prophet". These words, reminding the Muslims of the past pledges and promises, had marvellous effect on them. They at once wheeled round and determinedly rallied around the Prophet with cries of "Lubbayk! Lubbayk." (Here we are. Here we are). Then, jumping off their horses and camels, they placed themselves between the Holy Prophet and the advancing foe. The critical danger was past. Enemy's advance was checked, and the rest of the Muslim army again returned to the battlefield. Fighting was renewed with redoubled fury. At a critical moment the Prophet took a handful of dust and threw it into the faces of the enemy. This proved to be the breaking point of their resistance. Soon the Bedouin horde was put to flight. They fled headlong through the valley of Autas, leaving their all behind. The Thaqif, including Malik bin Auf, fled to Taif and shut themselves behind its strong walls.

Booty sent to Al-Jirana. The victory of Hunayn dealt a severe blow to the Hawazin. Their losses were great. They fled leaving their women, children and all their property behind. The Muslims captured a vast booty, comprising of 6,000 prisoners, 28,000 camels, 4,000 sheeps and 4,000 pieces of silver. The Prophet ordered his army to advance upon Taif and lay siege to it, while he despatched the women, children and the property of the Hawazin to al-Ji'rana. The Muslim losses were also great, especially among the Bedouin allies. Two tribes were said to be almost annihilated.

Consequences of the Battle of Hunayn. The Battle of Hunayn was one of the most important and decisive battles of the Holy Prophet. It was not so long-drawn and obstinate a struggle as the Prophet had to wage against the Quraysh. The reason was that he had to fight against a predominantly nomadic tribe which was warlike and stubborn, but not stable and persistent in its struggle. The Quraysh were a mercantile community, organised for a persistent and sustained war-affort. Nevertheless, the victory over the Hawazin was a notable and important one. The enemy was superior in numbers and warlike in spirit. Defeat would have been most disastrous for the cause of Islam ; but victory proved to be equally decisive. No nomadic tribe of Arabia posed such a threat

to the Holy Prophet and nascent Islam as the Hawazin did. Their discomfiture convinced all nomadic tribes of Central and Southern Arabia that the Holy Prophet was invincible. The supremacy of Islam and the sovereignty of the Islamie Rupublic of Medina were now ensured over all Arabia, which now rapidly submitted to the Holy Prophet almost without fighting.

In fact, the great battles of the Holy Prophet were now over. The age of wars was now succeeded by period of consolidation of Islam and of the Islamic Republic. Tribes after tribes all over Arabia sent their deputations to Medina to accept Islam. Thereby they recognised the Holy Prophet as the supreme power in Arabia and Medina as the centre of the Republic of Islam.

The Siege of Taif : February, 630 A.D.—After the battle of Hunayn, the Prophet led his troops towards Taif by the road of Nakhla and laid siege to it. Taif was a well-fortified city, with strong battlements and adequate supply of water and food. Muslims were deficient in siege weapons, while Banu Thaqif were determined to resist them for a long time. Whenever the Muslim troops pushed their way upto the walls of the city, its defenders showered on them a rain of arrows and other missiles, killing several and wounding many of the attackers. They were, therefore, obliged to withdraw from the walls to a respectable distance. The siege, lasted for some fifteen days without weakening Thaqif's determination. As a Bedouin chief remarked, they are like "a fox in its hole ; if you sit long enough, you may catch it, but if you leave it alone, it will not harm you". It became obvious that they would resist the attack stubbornly, but if left to themselves, they would cause no trouble to the Muslims. So the Prophet ordered his army to raise the siege and return to Jirana.

Distribution of the booty at al-Jirana: 24th February-9th March, 630.—The Bedouin allies of the Prophet were eager for their share in the booty captured from the Hawazin in the battle of Hunayn. He divided it as ordained in the Quran, that is, he reserved the royal fifth to be spent in the way of God and for His Messenger and distributed the rest amongst the soldiers. But soon after a deputation of the Hawazin came to the Prophet and begged for the restoration of their women and children. The Prophet at once returned those who had come in his share and appealed to do the same, if they so liked. At this the Muslims promptly set free the Hawazin women and children, who rejoined their menfolk. This generous treatment had a deep impression upon the Hawazin who soon after accepted Islam. Their chief, Malik bin Auf was the first to become a Muslim.

Conciliation of the hearts of the new converts.—Several Quray-

shite and Bedouin chiefs had accompanied the Muslim army to the battlefield of Hunayn. In order to "conciliate the hearts" of his new allies, the Prophet allotted a greater share to them out of the "royal fifth". Some of his donations may be mentioned here :

(1) Abu Sufyan got 300 camels and 100 pieces of silver. (He was a Qurayshite leader)

(2) Hakim bin Hizm, 200 camels (A Qurayshite leader of Asad clan)

(3) Nuzayr bin al-Harith, 100 camels (A Qurayshite leader of Abd-ad-Dar)

(4) Safwan bin Umayya, 100 camels (Qurayshite leader of Jumah)

(5) Harith bin Hisham, 100 camels (A Qurayshite leader of Makhzum)

(6) Suhayl bin Amr, 100 camels (A Qurayshite leader of Amir clan)

(7) Al-Aqra bin Habis, 100 camels (A Bedouin chief of Tamim tribe)

(8) Uyaynah bin Hisn 100 camels (A Bedouin chief of Ghatafan tribe)

(9) Malik bin Auf, 100 camels (A Bedouin chief of the Hawazin, a recent convert)

These acts of generosity were aptly described as *al-mu'allafah qulubu-hum*", *i.e.*, to conciliate the heart and strengthen the faith of those who had just become Muslims. They had a great effect on other tribes.

Some of the Ansars grumbled at the generous treatment of the Qurayshite leaders by the Holy Prophet. They also became apprehensive that he would not return to Mecca. On hearing their murmurs, the Prophet assembled them around him. After reminding them what he had done for them and what they had done for him, he addressed them in these words: "O, Ansars ! I have been told that you are dissatisfied at my donations to the Quraysh. But, O Ansars, are you not happy that I have made use of the worldly riches for the purpose of conciliation and gain the love of those who may become Muslims while I give you Islam and myself. O Helpers ! are you not satisfied to take home with you the Apostle

of God while others drive goats and camels to their homes. Remember O Ansars ! if the people choose one path and the Ansars another, I shall choose the path of the Ansars." On hearing these words the Ansars burst into tears of joy and declared with one acclaim that 'we are happy with the Apostle of God as our share'.

Return to Medina.—After settling the affairs at al-Jirana, the Prophet and the Muslims returned to Mecca and performed the Umrah. The Prophet then settled the matters at Mecca. He appointed Attab bin Asayd, a young scion of the Umayyad clan, as the governor of Mecca and then returned to Medina in the month of Zul Qada, 8 A.H.

SUBMISSION OF THE TRIBES TO ISLAM

General Spread of Islam in Arabia.—The fall of Mecca and the victory of Hunayn soon had a deep and far-reaching effect throughout the length and breadth of Arabia. Ibn Hisham, one of the earliest biographers of the Holy Prophet, aptly remarked. "The Arabs were waiting, with regard to Islam, the decision of the struggle between the Quraysh and the Prophet of God. And the reason for this was that the Quraysh were their leaders and guides and were the guardians of the House and of the Sacred Mosque. When Mecca was conquered and Islam overtook it, the Arabs realised that there was no power left to fight Muhammad and that he was their friend and not their enemy. They entered the faith of God in large numbers."

Spiritual leadership and Influence of the Quraysh.—Though not the political masters of pre-Islamic Arabia, the Quraysh were nevertheless the spiritual leaders of her multitudinous tribes. In fact their city, Mecca, was designated as *Umm-al-Qura*, the mother of towns, for it was the centre of religion and commerce of early Arabia. The Quraysh had acquired spiritual supremacy as the custodians of the national temple of Ka'ba, to which the tribes from all quarters of Arabia flocked to render a spiritual homage. Owing to their spiritual position, the Quraysh performed several functions and enjoyed several privileges, such as the custody of the Ka'ba, the conduct of the Hajj ceremonies, the intercalation of the annual calendar, and the commutation at will of the sacred months. All these functions and privileges gave the Quraysh a control over the minds—and even money—of the Arab tribes, who looked to them as leaders in the matters of faith. That is why when the Prophet invited any tribe to accept Islam before the fall of Mecca, they replied that he must first convert his own people to the faith.

Tribal Deputations. The fall of Mecca and the conversion of the Quraysh exercised a deep influence upon tne Arab tribes. Firstly,

it convinced them of the superiority of Islam over paganism, won after a long drawn-struggle. Secondly, the Holy Prophet succeeded to all the spiritual functions of the Quraysh, for Islam preserved and continued all the essential ceremonies of the Hajj which was regarded by them as a sort of national rite of all Arabia. Thirdly, the victory of the Prophet over the Quraysh and the Hawazin finally established his political supremacy over the whole of Arabia. The Arab people began to flock in even greater numbers under the banner of Islam. There was to be only one religion for Arabia and that was Islam.

A train of "deputations of the tribes came to Medina, accepted Islam and paid homage to the Prophet as the undisputed master of Arabia." That is why the next two years, 9th and especially the 10th year of the Hijra are known as the "years of deputations". Thus was Arabia united both religiously and politically—one of the greatest achievements of the Holy Prophet. Deputations came from the following tribes, clans or places : (1) Muzayna, (2) Asad (3) Temim (4) Abs (5) Fezara (6) Murrah (7) Tha'laba (8) Sa'd bin Bakr (9) Kilab (10) Bani al-Bakka, (11) Kinanah (12) Ashja (13) Bahila (14) Sulaym (15) Amir bin Sa'sa' (16) Thaqif of Taif (17) Abd ul-Qays (18) Bakr bin Wa'il of Eastern Arabia, (19) Taghlib, (20) Hanifa of Central Arabia, (21) Shayban, a brank of Bakr bin Wa'il, (22) Yemen, (23) Tayi (24) Murad of South Arabia, (25) Khaulan of South Arabia, (26) Kindah, (27) Azd of South Arabia, (28) Ghassan, on the borders of Syria, (29) Hamdan in South Arabia, (30) Nakha, (31) Kasham, (32) Hardamant, (33) Azd Uman, (34) Aslam, (35) Jukham, (36) Mahra in South-Eastern Arabia, (37) Najran, a city in the South, (38) Jayshan.

A deputation included several leading personalities of the tribe, and was usually headed by its chief. It received Islam and paid homage to the Prophet on behalf of the whole tribe, or that section or clan of it weich it represented. The members were received by the Prophet in the Mosque in Medina. They were lodged with one or more of his Companions who acted as hosts. Afterwards whom they returned to their tribe or city, they were usually accompanied by a Teacher to instruct the tribe in the rites and duties of the Islamic faith, a Tax-collector who collected the Zakat or Sadaqah from the converted tribe, and sometimes an administrator or governor to act as a deputy of the Prophet in the remote tribe or place.

The Deputation of Banu Tamim.—The first notable deputation came from the tribe of Temim of Eastern Arabia in the Ninth year of the Hijra. It consisted of eighty or ninety chief men of the tribe. When they arrived at the Mosque, they loudly challenged the Prophet to compete with them in poetry and oratory. The

Prophet accepted their challenge. First of all their orator, Atarid bin Hajib rose and, in the characteristic Arab fashion, boasted of the riches and power of his tribe. The Prophet asked Thebit bin Qays to reply, who thanked God for His favours for sending the Holy Prophet and the Holy Quran. Next a poet of Banu Tamim sang of the greatness and hospitality of his tribe. Lastly, Muslim poet Hassan bin Thabit declared that the Holy Prophet showed the world "a path which all men do tread". The Tamimites were so much impressed by the beauty of Hassan's poetry that they confessed the superiority of the Muslim orators and poets, and accepted Islam.

Conversion of the Thaqif.—Of all the tribes of Arabia, Banu Thaqif of Taif were the most obstinate in their profession of idolatry. They worshipped their tribal deity, the goddess Al-Lat, whose temple existed in their city, greatly venerated by them. As we said above, the Thaqif were for a short time besieged by the Muslims. But then the siege was lifted and they were left to themselves. When their neighbours, the Hawazin, accepted Islam, the Thaqif were left alone surrounded by Muslim neighbours. Thus isolated, their trade and prosperity suffered heavily. But they were wedded to idolatry and remained sullen and obstinate in their opposition to Islam. However their chief, Urwah bin Masud, went to Medina and accepted Islam. When he returned to Taif to preach Islam to his tribe they fell upon him and killed him. His martyrdom however, bore fruit soon after his death. A deputation of six chiefs with some twenty followers arrived at Medina in December, 630 A. D. and were welcomed by the Prophet. They professed Islam. But they expressed their fears that their fellow-citizens, especially womenfolk, would not readily accept Islam. They were devoted to their idol, al-Lat, which they would not demolish at all. So they asked the Prophet to leave the idol undemolished for some time. He rejected their offer, and insisted that the idol must fall without a single day's delay. He sent al-Mughira bin Shu'bah, who was also a Thaqifite but an early convert and Abu Sufyan to Taif to destroy the idol. They cut down the idol amid the cries and wailing of the women. Thus the Thaqif of Taif also joined the ranks of Islam.

The Year of Deputations.—So many deputations reached Medina in the 10th year of Hijrat, that it is known as the "Year of Deputations". They came in particular from the Central and Southern Arabia. Some of them are mentioned here.

Conversion of Uman.—When the Prophet returned to Medina after the victory of Hunayn, he sent Amr bin al-As with a letter to King of Uman, Jayfar, inviting him to profess Islam. After some hesitation, he embraced Islam, along with his nobles and tribes. Amr ibn-al-As resided in Uman till the death of the Prophet as his

deputy. He collected Zakat, but distributed it among the poor of Uman. The Prophet also sent a Teacher, who instructed the people in Islam.

Conversion of Mahra and the Yemen.—The Prophet also sent letters through his messengers to the princes of Mahra and the Yemen in the South. They all professed Islam and the messengers acted as "teachers" of Islam and deputies or governors on behalf of the Prophet.

Conversion of al-Mundhir of Bahrayn.—At the same time, the Prophet sent Al-Ala to the Prince of Bahrayn, named Al-Mundhir, inviting him to accept Islam. Al-Ala reached Hefre, the capital of Bahrayn. The Prince embraced Islam, while Al-Ala remained in his court as the deputy of the Prophet.

Deputation of Banu Bakr bin Wa'il and Taghlib.—In the extreme east of Arabia, on the borders of the Persian Empire dwelt two sister tribes, Bakr bin Wail and Taghlib. They were old rivals. Banu Bakr was a powerful tribe. It was divided into several clans, among whom Shayban was most warlike. This tribe had defeated a Persian army at Dhu Qar in 610 A. D. just at the time of the rise of Islam. Their victory encouraged them to look towards the Persian Empire as a future ground for expansion,—a possibility which became a reality under the banner of Islam during caliphate of Hazrat Abu Bakr. Banu Bakr bin Wa'il and Taghlib also sent deputations to Medina and several clans of them, especially Shayban, accepted Islam.

Deputation of Hanifa.—The tribe of Banu Hanifa dwelt at Yamamah in Central Arabia. It was a powerful tribe and was partly Christian. It was allied to Persia. The Prophet also sent a letter inviting them to Islam. Thereupon a deputation of Banu Hanifa came to Medina and accepted Islam. This deputation included Musaylima, who proclaimed himself as a Prophet soon after the demise of the Holy Prophet.

Deputations from Najran, Hadramawt, etc. A deputation came from the Christian city of Najran in the South. It included two bishops. The Christians entered into a treaty with the Prophet, by which Christianity was permitted to exist in Najran, while the Christians agreed to pay a yearly tribute to the Prophet. There were, however, some tribes in Najran who did not submit to Islam. The Prophet sent Khalid bin Walid against them. They agreed to send a duputation to Medina and embraced Islam. A similar expedition was sent under Hazrat Ali to the tribes of Yemen, who professed Islam. Thus Bani Khaulan, Bajila, Banu Azd, Jurash, etc., sent deputations to Medina and became Muslims. Finally, the

two Princes of Banu Kindah, named Wail and al-Ashath, who ruled Hadramawt, also headed a deputation to Medina. They also embraced Islam and returned to Hadramawt. As the whole of the South had submitted to Islam, the Prophet sent Mu'adh bin Jabal and other Muslims to instruct the people in the duties of Islam. Mu'adh also performed the functions of a judge on behalf of the Prophet. Thus Islam spread into the farthest corners of the Arabian Peninsula and the Arab tribes were united under the political supremacy of the Prophet. Only a few tribes or places did not wholly or whole-heartedly embraced the new faith, as the events after the Prophet's death were to reveal.

A word may be said about the submission of the Central and Southern tribes. No great army was sent against them to bring about their submission. Their deputations came and "teachers" were sent to them. It was due to two reasons. Firstly, the victories of the Prophet in the north convinced the tribes that resistance was futile. Secondly, unlike the great Byzantine Power in the north of Arabia, there was no Great Power in the South to conspire among the southern tribes and incite them against the Prophet and Islam.

Expedition to Tabuk. September-December 630 A. D.—The relations between the Muslim and the Christian tribes of Syria were strained since the battle of Mutah. The Byzantine Christians could not view with equanimity the growing unity of Arabia and the spread of Islam. Sometimes after the return of the Prophet from Mecca, news reached Medina of the gathering of a great Christian army on the borders of Syria with a view to attack the capital of Islam. In fact, Emperor Heraclius had collected a large force on the border and had ordered all the Christian Arab tribes to join in his crusade against Islam. In response to his call several Christian tribes, like the Ghassan, Beni Adhra, Bali, Lakhm and Judham flocked under the Byzantine banner. When the news of this huge force reached Medina, its vanguard had already arrived at the Belqa, near Jordan.

The concentration of the Christian forces on the borders was a danger which the Holy Prophet could not lightly disregard, for its object was the extiraption of Islam. The time was quite unfavourable for campaigning. The year was one of draught and famine in Northern Arabia. Summer was exceptionally hot. Arab tribes, especially the Bedouins, were most reluctant to fight the Byzantines whom they viewed with awe, particularly after the battle of Mutah only a year and half ago. Moreover, the Hypocrites—the Munafiqeen of Abdullah bin Ubay, were busy spreading discontent and fear among all and sundry. In spite of all this, the Prophet summoned the Muslims of the towns and of the desert to gather under his

standard in Medina for a campaign against the impending Christian attack. Several Bedouin allies of the Prophet excused themselves of this duty and the Prophet willingly exempted them from it, if the plea was justifiable. However, all his old Companions eagerly rallied under his banner and even contributed large sums for equipping a large force. Uthman contributed the greatest share.

At last the Prophet left Medina in September-October, 630, at the head of 30,000 men, the largest army that ever marched out of Medina. It included 10,000 horse and 20,000 foot. Abdullah bin Ubay also accompanied the main army with a large detachment of his "Hypocrites," but soon afterwards excused himself and returned to Medina.

The Prophet's army marched from Medina to the valley of Hajar, the stony land to the east of the Jordan after seven days of journey. But he found no Christian army. In fact, the Christian forces had simply dispersed and melted away when they heard of the Muslim advance. The Prophet marched from Hajar to Tabuk, near the Red Sea coast. Here again he awaited the news of the enemy, but none appeared. Finding no enemy, the Prophet despatched small expeditions against the various Christian and Jewish princes in the neighbourhood. Khalid bin Walid advanced against Ukaydir, the Christian Prince of Dumat ul Jandal, who surrendered to him after a brief fighting. He was brought to Medina, where he accepted Islam. The Prophet sent a letter to John bin Ruba, the Christian Prince of Ayla on the Red Sea. He submitted and entered into a treaty to pay tribute to the Prophet. Deputations came from the Jewish settlements of Manqa, Adhrukh and Jarba and tendered submission to the Prophet. At last after staying in Tabuk for twenty days the Prophet returned to Medina in the beginning of December, 630 A. D.

Significance of the Expedition to Tabuk.—Though the expedition to Tabuk did not achieve any military objectives, it nevertheless indicated (*i*) the direction from which Islam had to face the greatest danger, (*ii*) the importance which the Prophet attached to the defence of the northern borders of his young State, and (*iii*) the extension of the security system of *Pax Islamica* to the Christian tribes and Jewish settlements on the borders of Syria. This illustrated how he applied his "northern policy" which was to lead to such fruitful results only a couple of years after during the caliphates of Abu Bakr and Umar.

End of the Hypocrites.—One indirect result of the expedition of Tabuk was the final extinction of the Munafiqeen of Abdullah bin Ubay. He and his Hypocrites were busy with their usual tricks and plots to discourage and dissuade the Muslims from joining the

expedition against the Christians. Though Abdullah bin Ubay accompanied the Prophet in this expedition, he deserted, him on the way and returned to Medina to sow seeds of disaffection and discord among the citizens. He intended even to rise into revolt against the Muslims in case the Prophet met with a disaster or defeat on the Syrian border. But all such plots and schemings came to naught when the Prophet returned successfully to Medina.

A bdullah bin Ubay had since long put on the mask of Islam but atheart he was plotting against it. He thought that this hypocrisy would be the best policy to undermine Islam. The Prophet treated him with kindness and forgiveness. At first his Influence was very great among his fellow-citizens of Medina. But it dwindled continuously. Even then his "hypocrites" were influential enough to obstruct the expedition of Tabuk. They even built a mosque at Quba, in the outskirts of Medina just before the Prophet left for the expedition of Tabuk. On his return he ordered it to be destroyed as it had become a gathering place of the "hypocrites" and ot her disaffected elements in Medina. After two months of the returnfifrom Tabuk, Abdullah bin Ubay died and with his death the Munaoqeen ceased to exist.

Cnsolidation of Islam : the End of the Jahiliya.—By the end of the 9th year of the Hijrah, the whole of Arabia had been unified under Islam. But idolatry and paganism were still prevalent in the land. The idolaters and the Muslims still assemble in Mecca at the time of the pilgrimage and circumambulated the Ka'ba. Some of the practices of the pagans were abhorent to the Muslims, as, for instance, going naked around the Ka'ba. On receiving a Divine revelation, the Prophet at last decided to put an end to idolatry in the Peninsula for all times. When the time of the pilgrimage came in the 9th year of the Hijrah, he sent Abu Bakr to Mecca to conduct the ceremonies of the Hajj. After receiving another revelation the Prophet despatched Ali to Mecca to proclaim the end of the Jahiliya paganism.

Proclamation of the Ban on Paganism-February 631 A. D.—At the end of the ceremonies of the pilgrimage, Ali recited the Sura al Bara'a to all the assembled tribes and peoples of Arabia at Mina. He declared: "I am ordered to announce unto you that no Unbeliever shall enter Paradise. No idolater shall after this year perform the pilgrimage ; nor shall any make the circuit of the Holy Ka'ba unclothed. Whosoever has a a treaty with the Prophet, it shall be respected till its term expires. Four months are given to the tribes that they may return to their homes in security, after that the obligations of the Prophet cease."

Thus was heathendom banned in Arabia. The pagan tribes

got a period of grace of four months to move about in the evil ways of the Jahiliya ignorance. If they turned to God, they were to be instructed in the teachings of Islam and were to be accepted as the brethren-in-faith. Otherwise a war was to be waged against them till they submitted. The Jews, the Christians and Zoroastrians were to be tolerated, but they had to pay *jizya* or tribute to the Prophet. All obscenities and idol worship were to vanish at the time of the Hajj. So "from this day a new era dawned on Arabia and in fact this Hajj is the most important event in the history of Islam". In short, the Proclamation of the Ban on Paganism of the Jahiliya was the capping-stone to the grand edifice of Islam in Arabia, built by the Holy Prophet after two decades of struggles and hardships. Thus was Islam consolidated in Arabia.

CHAPTER 11

LAST DAYS OF THE HOLY PROPHET

Hajjat ul Wada or the Farewell Pilgrimage

The Last Pilgrimage: February-March, 632 A. D. We come to the last year of the Prophet's life. The 10th year of Hijra had seen Islam triumphant over the whole of Arabia. The Prophet announced his intention to perform the last pilgrimage at the end of the 10th year. The entire country responded to his call. Clans and tribes, bedecked in the pilgrims' garb, flocked into Mecca from all over the Peninsula. On the 25th Dhu'l Qada, the Holy Prophet left Medina, accompanied by about 90,000 persons. After ten days' journey, the Prophet entered Mecca, seated on his famous camel, Al-Qaswa, and approached the Ka'ba where he prayed. On this occasion, 124,000 pilgrims had assembled from the various corner of Arabia. But not a single idolater was among them.

The Pilgrimage begins. On the third day after his entry into Mecca, the 8th of Dhu'l Hijja, the pilgrimage began. At mid-day the Prophet had assembled at the Ka'ba and preached to the great congregation. Next day, on the 9th Dhu'l Hijja, he set out for Mina, accompanied by all the pilgrims, where he prayed.

Farewell Sermon at Arafat. Soon after mid-day, riding on his camel, Qaswa, the Prophet went to the centre of the valley of Arafat and delivered his address to the great congregation, every sentence of which was repeated by Rabia bin Umayya bin Khalf. In this address known as his Farewell Sermon, the Holy Prophet said:—

"O People! Listen to my words, for I do not know whether I shall ever meet you in this place again after this year."

Sanctity of Property and Life. "Your blood and your property are as scacred as are this Day and this Month. You will surely meet your Lord and He will ask you of your works. I have told you. He who is entrusted with property belonging to another should deliver his trust to whom it belongs. God has ordained to every man the share of his inheritance: a Testament is not lawful to the prejudice of heirs. The child belongs to his parents : and the violator of wedlock shall be stoned".

Usury abolished: "All usury is abolished, but you have your capital. Wrong not and you shall not be wronged. God has decided

that there is no usury. And all usury due to Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib is cancelled.

Bloodshed prohibited: "All bloodshed in the Days of Ignorance is to be left unavenged. The first claim on blood I abolish is that of Rabia ibn Harith bin Abdul Muttalib. It is the first blood shed in the Days of Ignorance which I deal with."

Intercalation of the year banned; "O men! the postponement of a sacred month is a custom of the Ignorance and Disbelief, whereby those who disbelieve are misled. They allow it one year but forbid it another year that they may permit what God has forbidden and forbid what God has allowed. But Time is eternal since God created the heavens and the earth. The number of months with God is twelve; four months are sacred, three consecutive and Rajab which is between Jamadi and Sha'ban."

Rights of wives protected. "O my people! You have rights over your wives and they have rights over you. You have the right that they should not defile your bed and that they should not behave with open immodesty. If they are guilty, God allows you to avoid intercourse with them and beat them without causing (serious) injury. But if they repent you must feed and clothe them with kindness. Instruct and order your women kindly, for they are prisoners with you, having no control over anything by themselves. You have taken them only as a trust from God and they have been made lawful to you by the Word of God".

Equality and Brotherhood of Muslims proclaimed. "O people! Listen to what I say and take it to heart. You must know that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim, and that all Muslims are brethren. All of you are as equal as the fingers of a hand. It is not lawful for any man to take anything of his brother's except what is given with one's own free will. Therefore do not do injustice to one another. The Arabs are not superior to the Ajamis nor the Ajamis to Arabs."

Kind treatment of slaves, "And your slaves! See that you feed them with such food as you eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff you wear; and if they commit a fault which you are not inclined to forgive, then part from them, for they are the servants of the Lord, and are not to be harshly treated."

"Let him that is present tell it unto him that is absent. May be he that shall be told may remember better than he who has heard it".

Then the Prophet asked, "O God! have I conveyed Thy

message?" Upon this the people replied with one accord. "Yes," And the Prophet added: "O God! Thou art my Witness".

Islam completed. At that very moment a revelation came to the Prophet, which he immediately recited to the great congregation :—

"This day, have I perfected for you your faith,
And completed My blessing upon you,
And have accepted for you Al-Islam as a religion"

—**Quran: V. 3.**

Thus God perfected Islam. Discerning minds among the Muslims understood that the mission of the Holy Prophet was fulfilled and that it was his last pilgrimage to the Holy Place. When the sun began to go down, the Prophet, and all the pilgrims returned with hurried steps to Mina, with the pilgrim's cry "Lubbayk, Lubbayk" on their lips. At Mina the rites of the sacrifice were performed and the Ihram or pilgrim's garbs were exchanged for the ordinary dress. With this the pilgrimage came to an end. The Prophet stayed three days at Mina and another three days at Mecca. Then the returned to Medina.

Significance of the Farewell Sermon. The Farewell Sermon on Mount Arafat was like the Sermon on Mont Sinai, no less grand yet more practical than the other. It appealed to both the greater and lesser minds among its hearers. "This sermon on the Mount", writes Syed Ameer Ali, "less poetically beautiful, certainly less mystical, than the other, appeals by its practicality and strong common sense to higher minds, and is also adapted to the capacity and demands of inferior natures which require positive and comprehensible directions for moral guidance". ("The Spirit of Islam" P. 114.) It was a sublime end to the Hajjat-ul-Wada, the Farewell Pilgrimage of the Holy Prophet.

Last six Months of the Prophet's life.

More Deputations and Administrative Measures. On his return to Medina, the Prophet again busied himself with the ever-increasing burdens of the State. He organised the provinces and tribal communities of the new Republic of Islam. He appointed officers to collect *Zakat* from the newly converted tribes and peoples of the Peninsula. He despatched teachers to instruct them in the practices of Islam and judges to settle their disputes. More deputations arrived at Medina to embrace Islam. Treaties were concluded or granted to several tribes.

Rumblings of the Ridda: The False Prophets: The last days of the Holy Prophet saw the emergence of the "false prophets", i.e. the imposters to prophetic office, in various parts of the Peninsula. They could not do any harm to Islam and the Islamic State so long as the Prophet lived. But soon after his death, they spearheaded a widespread movement of apostasy or "Ridda", Thus their emergence foreshadowed the difficult times which befell the Muslims after the Prophet's demise. Among these imposters, two became particularly active during the last months of the Prophet's life. They were Musaylima of Central Arabia and Al-Aswad al-Ansi of the Yemen. The third imposter named Tulayha of Najd, remained mostly quiescent during the Prophet's lifetime.

Musaylima had visited Medina with the deputation of his tribe, Banu Hanifa of Yamamah in Central Arabia. On his return to his tribe he proclaimed that he too received revelations and could work miracles. He said that he had become a prophet of his tribe, Hanifa, as Muhammad (may peace be upon him) was that of his Quraysh tribe. He wrote to the Holy Prophet that he too was a prophet and therefore, "I demand that you divide the earth with me; as for the Quraysh they are a people that have no respect for justice". The Holy Prophet wrote back "From Muhammad the Apostle of God to Musaylima the Liar. Peace be upon him who follows the guidance. The earth is God's. He lets whom He will of His creatures inherit it and the result is to the pious." Musaylima remained quite during the rest of the Prophet's life.

The Yemanite imposter, Aswad al-Ansi, however, rose into rebellion and called upon his people to break away from Islam. He was a chief of his tribe and a man of extraordinary strength. He claimed magical powers, which enabled him to collect some following behind him. He marched on Najran and captured it. He then advanced upon Sana, where he killed Shehr bin Bazan, whom the Prophet had appointed its governor. He forcibly married his wife. This proved to be his undoing, A party of Muslims was sent to Yeman. They made a plot against his life with Al-Ansi's wife, who hated him. They got an entry into his palace, and, while he was asleep in his room, they cut his throat. He uttered a cry for help and his guard ran to his rescue. But his wife kept them out by saying that their prophet was receiving a revelation from the Most High. Thus died Aswad al-Ansi. His death occurred only a day before the Prophet's demise. With his death apostasy subsided in the Yeman to some extent.

Usama's expedition. A few days before his last illness, the Holy Prophet ordered an army under Usma bin Zayd to march against the Christian tribes on Syrian borders who had caused the death of Usma's father, Zayd bin Haritha, in the battle of Mutah.

He ordered even Abu Bakr and Umar to join Usama's expedition. As was customary in those days the army of Usama stayed for a few days at Jurf, in the outskirts of Medina, But before it could depart, the Prophet fell seriously ill and its departure was put off during his illness.

The Last Illness and Death of the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet had been poisoned by a Jewish hostess at the time of the conquest of Khayber. Though he recovered from the immediate effects of this poisoning, its after-effects were felt by him ever afterwards. At last, with advancing years, now sixty three years of age, his powerful physique could bear the evil effects of the poisoning no longer. While busy with the preparations of Usama's army, he fell seriously ill with severe headache and a high fever. His illness lasted for about fifteen days. At first he continued to perform all his duties as usual and led the prayers in his Mosque. But after five days of illness, when he became too weak, he retired to the apartment of Ayesha, with the consent of his other wives.

Abu Bakr appointed Imam. A couple of days later, some people complained to him over the appointment of Usama as the commander of the army even though he was a mere lad of about twenty. But the Prophet rejected their request with the remark that, "I swear by the Lord that he is well fitted for the command. Truly Usama is one of the men most dearly loved by me, even as his father was. Treat him well, for he is one of the best amongst you." Then the Prophet told the people that as he would not live long, he commanded the Muhajireen to honour the Ansars of Medina. Finally he appointed Abu Bakr to lead public prayers, as he was too weak to perform this duty himself. This is the only indication from the Prophet as to whom he would like to succeed as his deputy in political authority, for in early Islam the exercise of political power was the prerogative of him who acted as an Imam at the public prayers.

On the tenth day of his illness, and three days before his death, the condition of the Prophet became very serious. His fever became intensely violent, his body aching with pain. Sometimes he even became delirious, and unconscious. This condition lasted for two days. On the twelfth day of the sickness, the fever abated and pain subsided.

The end. Next morning, feeling better, the Prophet rose from his bed and walked into the Mosque supported by the attendants. Abu Bakr was conducting the morning prayer. His appearance sent a wave of joy among the Muslims and they talked with the Prophet with joy. The Prophet begged forgiveness from his hearers and exhorted them to follow the path of God. Then he rose and

was helped back into the house of Ayesha. This proved to be his last appearance in the public. His exertions exhausted him and his illness took a turn for the worse. By midday his condition became critical and his strength sank rapidly. A few moments later he breathed his last. Voices rose on all sides: "Peace be on you, O Prophet of the Lord, and mercy from Him and His blessing".

The Holy Prophet died on Monday, the 8th of June; 632/12 Rabbi-ul-Awwal. 11 A.H. He was buried during the night on the very spot where he had breathed his last.

Character or "Sirat" of the Prophet

Personality or "Sirat" of the Holy Prophet. The character and personality of the Holy Prophet have always been a subject of close and searching enquiry by all kinds of people, friends as well as foes. In fact, there has been no man in human history whose personal conduct and private life have been so much pried into by all types of persons and discussed, attacked or defended by a host of writers in all ages and climes. We here propose not to throw any new light on him but to focus attention on such aspects of the personality and character of the Holy Prophet as would enable us to understand his historical role as a leader, a builder of a State and as a man.

His Appearance. The Holy Prophet was a man of a little more than average height, but of sturdy frame with broad shoulders, wide chest long arms and strong bones and muscles. His form was stately and commanding. He had dark hair, slightly curled, and properly combined, flowing in dense mass almost to his shoulders. They turned grey but slightly late in age, due to the agonies of his Revelations, especially of the Suras *Hud*, the Inevitable and the Striking, as he himself said. He clipped his moustaches, but had a full beard. His great black eyes with a touch of brown, shone under long, heavy eyelashes, and possessed a depth of feeling and expression which captivated the hearts of the people even at first sight. His nose was large and some what acquiline; his teeth, on which he bestowed great care, were well-set and dazzling white. His head was massive and his forehead large and prominent which gave his oval face an openness and attraction that gained him the confidence and love of strangers even, In complexion he was fair, —"red and white" as his early biographers put it—with clear and soft skin and delicate hands, even as those of a woman. His steps were light and brisk, like those of a man who was rushing down-hill, neither too fast, nor too slow. But when in a hurry, he walked so fast that it was difficult for others to keep pace with him. When he talked, he turned not only his face but his whole body towards his hearers. His whole gait and presence were dignified and imposing.

He talked little and laughed rarely, but a beaming smile constantly played upon his bright face, which made him, as a Muslim who saw him said, "the most handsome and bravest, the brightest-faced and most generous of men. It was as though the sunlight beamed in his countenance".

His Habits. In his habits, he was simple and loved cleanliness of person and dress. His needs were few and rigidly controlled. His dress and daily articles of use and his eating and drinking remained simple and meagre even in the days of his power and sovereignty in Medina as they were in Mecca when he was a poor and persecuted preacher. Though the Sovereign Lord of Arabia, he lived in a cottage made of mud walls of sun-dried bricks and with leather curtains, instead of doors. He slept on the floor, with a mat underneath, which he did not permit to be folded, lest he might feel too cosy to get up and pray for long hours at night. He loved to do his work by himself. He mended his clothes, repaired his shoes, milked his goats, cleaned his rooms and helped his wives in their household duties. No work was too low for him. He worked like a labourer to build the Mosque in Medina, and to dig the trench at the time of the Battle of the Ditch. He tied his own camel and looked after it personally. And all this he continued to do even when he was the Lord of Arabia. Comforts of life he avoided; luxuries he hated. Hazrat Ayesha once remarked that "the Prophet of God loved three things most—food, perfumes, and women. The last two, he had to his heart content, while the first, food, he had little. He did not even got two square meals for days on end." Among foods, milk and honey he liked most, but he mostly got coarse barley bread. Strong smelling things, like onions and garlic, he disliked. His dress too was simple. It consisted of two garments, all patched over. But they were neat and clean. Silk he disliked as unmanly wear.

His disposition and Manners. By temperament the Holy Prophet was sad, silent and pensive. For hours he would sit silent, enwrapped in his thoughts and in his mantle, oblivious to talk and murmurs around him. He never spoke unnecessarily. But when he spoke, he spoke in a low voice, distinctly and rapidly, but to the point. Over his feelings he had a firm control. He was not easily annoyed. When angry, he would turn aside, and when pleased, he lowered his eyes. "He was more bashful than a veiled virgin," said Ayesha. He was considerate and kind even to the most insignificant of his followers. He was the sweetest and the most agreeable in conversation, even with the humblest of his followers. As Muir writes, "modesty and kindliness, patience, self-denial, and generosity, pervaded his conduct, and riveted the affections of all round him. He disliked to say 'No'......He possessed the rare faculty of making each individual in a company think that he was the most favoured

guest......With the bereaved and afflicted he sympathised tenderly". He was magnanimous and moderate towards his enemies, merciful towards his critics, kind and faithful towards his friends, affectionate towards his family, lovingly tender towards the children, loyal towards his companions and associates and gentle towards his servants. Along with a kindly, gentle and benevolent disposition, he passessed "mighty powers of imagination, elevation of mind, delicacy and refinement of feeling.

His Character. The Holy Prophet was a paragon of virtue. He possessed all great qualities of head and heart. Yet he also has his detractors, especially in Europe and America. Of all the world's great men "as Montgomery Watt has aptly remarked, "none has been so much maligned as Muhammad (sm)". We shall not go into their scurrilous and groundless charges of cruetly, treachery, deception and sensuality. They are obviously false. Instead, we shall delineate the sublimity, nobility and greatness of his head and heart, his mind and intellect. This positive approach is better than a negative refutation and an apolegetic explanation.

Earnestness and honesty in his Prohetic Mission. First great trait of his personality and mind was his earnestness, sincerity and honesty of purpose. His whole life was devoted to one single cause: the belief and worship of One Supreme God of Islam or submission to His Will. From this path he never deviated by a fraction of an inch through all his trials and tribulations, privations and hardships, in his native place and in exile, and in face and dangers of wars and intrigues, and in all circumstance, whether of poverty and persecution or of success, victory and sovereignty over all Arabia. In the service of this supreme cause, the Holy Prophet displayed superb qualities of courage, resoluteness, impartiality, firmness tempered with generosity, and above all humility and self-effacement.

"Muhammad (sm)", writes Bosworth Smith, "never wavered in his belief in his own mission, nor, what is more extraordinary, in his belief as to its precise nature and well defined limits. He was a Prophet charged with a mission from God; nothing less, but nothing more. He might make mistakes, lose battles, do wrong acts, but nonetheless did he believe that the words he spoke were the very words of God." A German writer, Professor Noldeke writes, "Circumstances changed him from a Prophet to a Legislator and a Ruler, but for himself he sought nothing beyond the acknowledgement that he was Allah's Apostle, since this includes the whole of Islam." In his thorough earnestness lay the secret of his success. "On the whole" continues Bosworth Smith; "the wonder is to me not how much, but how little, under different circumstances, Muhammad (Sm) differed from himself. In the shepherd of the desert, in the Syrian trader, in the solitary of Mount Hira, in the

reformer in the minority of one, in the exile of Medina, in the acknowledged conqueror, in the equal of Persian Chosroes and the Greek Heraclius, we can still trace a substantial unity. I doubt whether any man, whose external conditions changed so much, ever himself changed less to meet them, the accidents are changed, the essence seems to me to be the same in all". Major A. G. Leonard writes: "Personal ambition and aggrandizement never for a moment entered his head or formed part of it. The national good, to be attained only by a national or Universal God—the one and only God of the universe—was the one great ambition that inspired and impelled him."

Emile Dermenghem writes: He (Muhammad) had acquired power, riches and glory; he possessed gold, spirited horses, innumerable camels and vast pasture lands; he had wives and children; he had all that formed 'the ornament of earthly existence'. But he was not made haughty by these things. *One sincere conversion to Islam brought him greater joy than the richest booty.* But a secret sorrow troubled his soul; the inability of many to understand the real meaning of his message and his helplessness before the hypocrisy of those who had come over to him only because he was the stronger. Perhaps, too, there was a touch of sadness, a touch of remorse for the inevitable impurity that creaps into all politics, all wars and all governments of this earth". He continues further, "It was certainly not with soft words that he made converts, but in presenting his brilliant message in all its vigour, simple and sharp as the edge of a sword, a message which he carefully distinguished from his personal views.

His Modesty. He had no pretensions and hated all sham. "I am only a preacher of God's word, the bringer of God's message to mankind". Once a companion addressed him thus:" O, our Master! the son of our Master!...", and the Holy Prophet said. "I am but Muhammad, the son of Abdullah, the servant of God and His Apostle. I do not desire that you should exceed that which God has conferred on me." Again, a man once said to him, "O the best of the world" whereupon Muhammad said, "That was Abraham, not I." And he behaved in this humble and meek way, not among opponents and the powerful, but amidst his devoted admirers and loyal friends and numerous followers and at a time when he had otherwise all instruments of power and authority in his hands. When he entered Mecca victoriously at the head of a large army, he did not strut like a haughty conqueror, but bowed his head in humble thanksgiving to God again and again like an humble suppliant. And the Holy Quran proclaims: "Certainly, you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day and remembers Allah much".

(Sura 33 : 21)

His Justice and moderation. Another trait of the Prophet's character was his deep sence of justice, moderation and scrupulous fairness and even-handed impartiality. Muslims and non-Muslims, friends and foes, were all alike in his eyes, if it was not a matter of serving the supreme mission of Islam or the worship and belief in the Oneness of God. Even before the Call, he was famous in Mecca for his honesty, his integrity and trust-worthiness, as is warranted by such titles as "Al-Amin," etc. When he became the Sovereign of Arabia, and possessed a power, almost dictatorial, he remained, as Muir says, just, temperate and moderate even towards his enemies. "The long and obstinate struggle against his pretensions," writes Sir William Muir, "maintained by the inhabitants of Mecca might have induced its conqueror to mark his indignation in indelible traces of fire and blood. But Mohammad, excepting a few criminals, granted a universal pardon; and, nobly casting into oblivion the memory of the past, with all its mockery, its affronts and persecutions, he treated even the foremost of his opponents with a gracious and even friendly consideration."[1] And justice in his eyes meant not only equitable reward and punishment with regard to the debts and duties of this world but also of the next. "O Fatima, my daughter," he exclaimed, while in the throes of death during his last illness, "and Sufiya, my aunt ! Do such good works as shall gain acceptance for you with the Lord; for surely I have no power with Him to save you in any way."

Sympathy for the poor, the weak and the distressed. His sympathy for the poor, the weak and the distressed was boundless, which extended even to the dumb creatures. He would feed the hungry while he himself would remain hungry. Throughout his life, he had a deep sympathy for the widows, the orphans and the afflicted. His fondness for the children was limitless. Though he did not prohibit slavery, he himself never kept a slave, but set him free as soon as he got one. "A man who ill-treats his slave," he said "will not enter paradise." And, "Forgive your servant seventy times a day".

Humility. Humility was one of the most prominent traits of his character. He would conduct himself just as a man like others. He disliked to be treated with special regard or placed on a higher pedestal. "I am no more than man," he said, "when I order you anything with respect to religion, receive it, and when I order you about the affairs of the world, then I am nothing more than man." His humility was shown by the fact that he rode upon asses. He accepted invitation to feast even of a slave. Once as he came the people rose to greet him. But he forbade them and said, "Do not rise for me as do the people of Ajam *i. e.* Persia. And he added

1. *Life of Muhammad*, p. 513.

further. "I sit at meals as a servant does, and I eat like a servant : for I really am a servant." Again, when a person tried to kiss his hands, he withdrew them, remarking that it was the way as the Ajamis behaved towards their monarchs. If a person felt nervous in his presence, he would put him at ease by saying, "Be not afraid of me; I am not a king, but the son of a simple woman who ate dried meat." Access to him was most easy. Nothing illustrates his humility and his purity of heart and his profound humanity more than his heartfelt remorse on spurning of blind old man, Abdullah bin Um Makhtum while engaged in a religious conversation with a rich Qurayshite, Al-Walid. The thought of his thoughtless spurning of the "humble seeker of truth" rankled in his heart and smote him with remorse ever after till he had not sought God's forgiveness. Later he appointed him twice governor of Medina. When he shook hands, he did not with draw his hand first; and when he conversed, he did not break off before the other.

His Thoroughness. The secret of his success as a leader and as a statesman was his steadfastness, fortitude, consistency and thoroughness in work, planning and policy. "Thorough and complete in all his actions," writes Muir, "he took in hand no work without bringing it to a close. Hence he loved to do things himself and plan every action carefully, thoroughly, beforehand. This was the secret of his success as a general, an administrator and a statesman." At the time of a battle, he arrayed his forces carefully, posted them at strategic positions, and directed fighting from moment to moment. He wrote letters, issued orders, appointed officials and judges with utmost forethought and after a thorough review of the situation and needs of the moment. His daily life was strictly regulated by a rigid time-table : one part of his day was devoted to public matters, another to prayers and the third to family life.

His Mind. The Holy Prophet was gifted with "mighty powers of imagination, a very good memory, a lively conception, elevation of mind, and an excellent genuis and capacity." Though unlettered, he had observed and studied human life and Nature with the profundity of a philosopher, the insight of a seer, the depth of feelings of a social reformer, the zeal and resolution of a revolutionary and the objectivity of a scientist. C. S. Mill writes, "Deeply read in the volume of nature, though entirely ignorant of letters, his (Muhammad's) mind could expand into controversy with the wisest of his enemies, or contract itself to the apprehension of the meanest of his disciples."

His Modernity. One of the most remarkable features of the Prophet's mind was its modern attitude towards life and nature. "The mind of this remarkable Teacher" writes Syed Ameer Ali, "was, in its intellectualism and progressive ideals, essentially

modern.[1]" Life, according to the Prophet, was action and "striving". "Man cannot exist without effort," he said. Or, "The effort is from me, its fulfilment comes from God." He also taught that the world was not a chaos but "a well-ordered creation, regulated and guided by a Supreme Intelligence overshadowing the Universe —Everthing is pledged to its own time." He claimed to miraculous or supernatural powers, and disclaimed all powers to perform miracles, except what God gave him, *i. e.*, the miracle of Quran, the greatest of the miracles, for it is a book revealed to 'an ignorant and unlearned man.'

Not a Fatalist. Contrary views notwithstanding, the Holy Prophet was not a fatalist in the ordinary sense, as this term has now come to mean. Though his mind was pervaded with the conviction that every thing necessarily and inevitable happens by the Will of God, he nevertheless, believed that Divine Will can be influenced by human action or 'striving' and by prayers." This attitude does not imply passivism and quietism, as fatalism is ordinarily understood. Though absolutely convinced of ultimate success in his Mission, the Prophet left nothing to chance or to mere expectations of Divine favour. He regarded himself not a passive instrument but an active "servant of the Divine Will." That is why he was not a hermit or a recluse, withdrawn from the dangers and pitfalls of the world, but a practical reformer and a "Messenger of God sent to guide and teach the mankind". The Prophet taught, as R. B. Smith says, that "there is a Supreme Ruler who never leaves the helm ; who knows what is really best for man when man himself does not, and whose supreme will and power, where he asserts them, cannot be crossed by the efforts of the creatures of His hand". But this is not the only side of his teachings. He asserts that man is a free agent ; free to refuse or to accept the Divine message, responsible for his acts, and therefore deserving, now of punishment, now of reward. The future, in fact, is in his own hands, and Mohammad incessantly urges him to use his opportunities.

Achievements of the Holy Prophet. A character so noble, a personality so great, a mind so profound, and a faith so strong as those of the Holy Prophet could not fail to make an epoch in world history. He is one of those few men who have changed the course of human history. We shall here delineate some of his epoch-making achievements.

1. End of the Jahiliya Period. First of all, he put to an end the Age of Ignorance or Jahiliya, with all its injustices, tyrannies, miseries. "Certainly", says the Holy Quran (Sura 9 : 128) "an Apostle has come to you from among yourselves, grievous to him is

1. *The Spirit of Islam*, p. 121.

your falling into distress, excessively solicitous respecting you". Idolatory, mutual feuds and revenge-seeking, injustices to women, orphans, widows, slaves and other weaker sections of the society, were some of the religious, social and moral evils and superstitions which were wiped out from the ancient land of Arabia during his ministry of the Holy Office. The growth of money economy and big finance of the Quraysh and other merchantile tribes, which threatened to disrupt the pastoral and natural economy of the Bedouin nomadism and reduce the nomadic tribes to the level of serfs and bondsmen of the merchantile tribes of the town, was checked by the prohibition of usury. Respect for private property or personal ownership, patriarchal family and marriage system and a greater worth of the individual became the uniform and universal institutions of the Arabian society under Islam after the Prophet. However, Islam did not go to the extreme of substituting money economy by the pastoral economy of the past. Money economy, but without interest or usury, continued to exist under the new dispensation of Islam.

Economic Geography and History of Arabia. Moreover the Jahiliya Period was an age of the struggle between the Desert and the Sown, between the nomads of the desert and the settled communities in towns and villages of the vast land of Arabia. The victory of the Prophet and Islam was the victory of the more cultured and progressive communities of the towns and villages over the unruly and backward communities of the Bedouin nomads. This was at once the cause and consequence of the success of the Prophet. Socially, economically and culturally the desert in the Arabia of Islam receded, while the Sown advanced. But the soil and the geograpy of the Peninsula were not suitable for the complete victory of the Sown over the Desert. That is why Islam had to spread into the fertile lands in the neighbourhood of Arabia, if the Islamic Revolution in the country was to be lasting and permanent. Conquest of the lands of the "Fertile Crescent" by early Islam lay in the logic of the economic geography of the new Arabia of Islam. It was brought about by the energy and initiative of early Muslims, and inspired by the uniform and dynamic social order of the early Islam.

2. **Unification of the Arab Tribes**. As we have shown in the previous chapters, another great achievement of the Holy Prophet was the unification of all the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula on the basis of the political supremacy of the Prophet and the common belief of Islam. The differences and disputes of the earlier ages and the narrow parochialism and pride of the tribes were swept away by the new unity and common allegiance to the Prophet and Islam. All the Arab tribes were unified into an *Ummah* or the community of Islam, with common belief and practices of one

religion and State. Thus the Holy Prophet built in Arabia a new nation and a new State on the basis of Islam.

3. **Consolidation of Islam,** Islam was not only revealed to the Holy Prophet, it was also consolidated by him within the national boundaries of Arabia. He was not only the Prophet, but also the statesman, the seer and the builder of Islam, both as a religion, a state and a society, "Muhammad's career" writes Rodwell, "is a wonderful instance of the force and life that resides in him who possesses an intense Faith in God and in the unseen world; he will always be regarded as one of those who have had that influence over the faith, morals and whole earthly life of their fellow-men, which none but a really great men ever did, or can, exercise; and whose efforts to propagate a great verity will prosper".

4. **Foundation of a universal religion**. The Holy Prophet also laid foundations of its universality and world-wide propagation. As we have said in a previous chapter, while he was yet a chief of a little republic of Medina in the corner of Hijaz, and was still surrounded by powerful enemies, he despatched letters and messengers to the mighty princes, kings and emperors of the countries and empires abroad. Though it arose in Arabia, Islam was meant for the whole mankind.

5. **Transformation of the Arab People.** Finally, the Prophet transformed the national character and spirit of the Arab people. They were a virile but divided people. They were torn by their mutual quarrels, tribal disputes and hatreds. They were ignorant of all higher values of life and society. They were devoid of all morals and deceney. They knew of no art and culture, science and learning. They were held in utter contempt by all their neighbours as barbarian and brutes. But within a brief span of a single generation, these very people became a mighty nation of conquerors, generals, administrators, law-givers, judges, scholars, scientists and saints. Never in the history of the world has occurred such a transformation of the whole nation brought about so suddenly and yet so suddenly and yet so completely and thoroughly! They built an empire which was one of the greatest in World History and a civilisation which was highest of its age. And all this was the achievement of one and one man alone—Muhammad (sm), the Prophet of Islam. "True," writes Major Arthur Glyn Leonard, in his book 'Islam, Her Moral and Spiritual Value", "True, the Arabs in themselves were a great and virile people. But it was the genius of Mohammad, and spirits he breathed into them through the soul of Islam, that exalted them. That raised them out of the lethargy and low level of tribal stagnation, upto the high water-mark of national unity and Empire".

A review of the Prophet's Achievements. The epoch-making achievements of the Holy Prophet were made in circumstances of utmost difficulty. Never in the history of the world a man had so little and achieved so much as the Prophet did. The Holy Prophet began his life as an orphan, lived in his boyhood and youth in poverty as a spepherd and a salesman, and then as a recluse in Mount Hira, then he became an humble preacher, for which he was persecuted and hunted out of his native city, to become a refugee in an alien city. At last, he rose to be "the ruler of Arabia, the equal of Chosroes and of Caesar, the arbiter of the distinies of a nation". He left behind a nation, a religion and a government. J. W. H. Stobart in his book, "Islam and Its Founder", righly says, "Judged by the smallness of the means at his disposal, and the extent and permanence of the work he accomplished, no name in the world's history shines with a more spacious lustre than that of the Prophet of Mecca......Judged by the standard of human renown, the glory of what mortal can compare with his?" The author of the article on "Koran" in the Encyclopaedia Britannica has aptly remarked: "Of all the religious personalities of the world, Muhammad was the most successful". His personal circumstances were unfavourable, his resources limited, his environment hostile, his people depraved, while his followers were few and his enemies many. In spite of this all, his achievements were so great. A judicious author, Montgomery Watt, has succinctly but aptly remarked, "The more one reflects on the history of Muhammad and of early Islam, the more one is amazed at the vastness of his achievement...Had it not been for his gifts as seer, statesman, and administer, and, behind these, his trust in God and firm belief that God had sent him, a notable Chapter in the history of mankind would have remained unwritten".[1]

Historical Implications of the Islamic Revolution. In short, the Holy Prophet brought about a revolution in Arabia—The Islamic Revolution, one of the greatest revolutions in world-history both in respect of its immediate and long-term effects. It transformed not only the society and history of the Arabian Peninsula, but also the vast regions of the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe, which constituted the whole world then.

But such are the ways of human history that no revolution remains permanent unless and until it is not continued by the same process of action and achievement which gave it its initial impulse energy. The reason is quite simple. In course of time, history confronts every human achievement and revolution with circumstances and situations which can be met with and overcome by new manifestations of impulse and energy and/or with new emphasis on

1. *Muhammad at Madina*, p. 335.

other aspects or principles of the initial revolution or achievement. History confronted Islam with such situations and problems immediately after the death of the Prophet. He left behind him a group of his close associates and companions whom he had instructed and taught in the spirit of Islam and its traditions. They met the challenge of new situation and problems in the way as he would have himself met if he were alive. They were his immediate successors, the Orthodox Caliphs and their associates.

This happy situation lasted for a generation or two after the Prophet and his successors. After a century or so, the environment of Islam began to change: its pristine unity and energy began to dwindle. New situations were not met with new manifestations of impulse and energy and new problem were not solved with a new emphasis on the inner spirit of Islam—its spirit of equality, fraternity, social justice and quest for knowledge. On the contrary, emphasis was laid on such extraneous aspects of its as the Jizya, the slavery, the usury, polygamy, the exclusion and segregation of women from national life, etc., while such essential tasks were neglected as the missionary work and diffusion of Islam among the non-Muslims masses within the Islamic Empire or '*Dar ul-Islam*', the development of feudal economy by suppressing slavery and tribalism, institutionalisation of the early Islamic republicanism and elective system and the suppression of religious schisms by State-action rather than their interminable continuation by sectarian quiblings and wranglings, which divided the people, disrupted the religion and weakened the State and society of Islam. When a people cease to meet new situations with new visions, they decline and perish.

CHAPTER 12

GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY UNDER THE PROPHET

Islamic State under the Prophet. Pre-Islamic Arabia was the land of the tribes. There was no single, centralised State or kingdom for the whole country. Each tribe, especially, the bigger ones, was independent and sovereign. It provided security of life and property within its limits. But outside the tribe, there could be no security of life and property. Relations between the tribes were of perpetual war and violence against each other. Membership of a tribe was based on kinship or blood-relationship. The Pre-Islamic Arabs knew of no unity or organisation beyond their tribes. If two or more tribes entered into an alliance, it was both specific and limited to the purpose of the alliance, such as to wage war against another tribe or tribal confederacy.

Holy Prophet built a new political organisation, called the *Ummah* or State, on principles which were derived partly from the earlier tribal system, and partly based on the new religion of Islam. The Islamic Ummah comprised of the tribes and provinces of pre-Islamic Arabia. It was, therefore, a sort of 'super-tribe,' or a nation of tribes and city-communities.

It was a tribal confederacy of a new type. It differed from the Pre-Islamic tribal alliances or confideracies in two important ways. Firstly, unlike the old tribes, the *Ummah* was based on religion and not on kinship or blood-relationship. Secondly, it was not a temporary union for specific purposes and limited duration, but a permanent and indissoluble union, based on the common allegiance to the Prophet and loyalty to Islam and God. Allah was the Full Sovereign and the Prophet was the sovereign Head of the *Ummah.* To disobey the Prophet was to disobey the injunctions of Islam and God and, therefore, to renounce the membership of the Islamic State. So one became, religiously, an apostate, politically a rebel, legally an outlaw and socially an outcast. The Islamic State recognised the suzerainty of God who was "the head and director of the *Ummah.*" If it entered into treaties with foreign tribes or princes, it was in the name of God and His Apostle. If peace was disturbed internally, it was the disturbance of the security or *'aman'* of God, Islam and the Prophet. Any act against the injunctions of the Quran was not only forbidden, but regarded as a manifestation of the heathenic or idolatrous spirit of the Jahiliya, condemned both by Allah and his Prophet.

The Government of the Islamic State. Allah was the suzerain of the Islamic State. He revealed His Will to the Prophet through the Quran. The Law of God, as revealed in the Quran was binding on all Muslims, including the Prophet, the Head of the Islamic State. Where the Quran was silent, the authority of the Prophet was supreme. In such matters, the Prophet was the sovereign and his word was law.

The Prophet as the Sovereign. The Prophet was the Sovereign Head of the Islamic State, subject to the superior authority of God, as described above. He possessed both spiritual and secular authority and political and judicial powers. He was the Head of the State, of which he was also the founder and builder. He was the ruler and Lawgiver. He was the supreme commander of all the forces of Islam. He was the chief executive and the head of the entire administrative machinery. He was also the supreme judge. He made laws in the light of the injunctions of the Quran, and settled disputes accordingly. He determined social relations. He raised armies; he despatched expeditions or personally led them. He determined foreign relations, concluded treaties with foreign rulers, princes and tribes. He acquired territories and administered them.

The Mosque of Medina. The Mosque of the Holy Prophet in Medina was both the place of worship, the office and court of the Holy Prophet as he combined in his person the dual functions of Prophethood and sovereignty. He led public prayers in the Mosque as the Imam. But he also conducted all the business of the State in it. Though the sovereign master of Arabia, possessing absolute powers, the Prophet always consulated his companions and close associates in all matters, except those in respect of which God had revealed him His Will through the revelations. From the Mosque, the Prophet despatched letters and messengers to foreign rulers and tribes, and executed treaties. He received foreign embassies and tribal deputations in the court of the Mosque and issued orders to his governors and tax-collectors. The Mosque was also his law-court, where he heared cases and settled disputes. His scribes and officials also worked in the Mosque, which was, therefore, his secretariat also.

The Mimbar. If the Mosque was the office of the Prophet, the Mimbar or the place from where he delivered his sermons, was the seat and symbol of his authority both as an Imam and as a Sovereign. Both the Mosque and the Mimbar remained as the politico-religious institutions of Islam long after the death of the Holy Prophet, especially during the Orthodox Caliphate. Dr. Arnold is, however, of the opinion that the 'Mimbar' had its origin as an institution long before the Holy Prophet. According

to him, the "mimbar" was the seat from where the Arab judges in the pre-Islamic days used to pronounce their decisions.

The Secretariat. Though the structure of the early Islamic State was simple, we find the rudiments of the various departments of the central government in the days of the Holy Prophet As his functions aud burdens of the State multiplied, he employed an increasingly large number of secretaries and officials, besides the scribes or amanuenses to write the Quranic revelations. All of them worked in the compound of the Mosque, which was, therefore, also a secretariat of the Holy Prophet. Thus Zubayr bin al-Awwam and Juhaym bin as-Salt kept records of the goods and moneys received by way of Zakat and Sadaqat. Mughirah bin Shubah and Hasan bin Namir acted as registrars of the official deals and transactions between the people. Hudayfah bin al-Yaman prepared estimates of revenues from the date-palms. Al-Ala bin Uqbah maintained records of the and their rights regarding pastures, water, etc. Zayd bin Thabit and Abdullah bin al-Arqam drafted letters addressed to kings and chiefs. Hanzalah bin Rabi was the keeper of the Prophet's seal. This was the simple but efficient structure of the Central Government under the Holy Prophet.

Provincial Administration Islamic Polity under the Prophet was not a state of the modern type. It did not possess a vast network of administrative organisation spread over the whole peninsula. The reason was simple. The early Islamic State was a centralised confederacy of the semi-autonomous tribes and a few towns and cities. Their chiefs had retained a fair degree of automony and authority within their tribes or localities under the paramount power of the Prophet and the injunctions of Islam. In the case of several tribes and some cities, the Prophet acted through their chiefs, instead of appointing his own officials over them. Nevertheless, he also appointed various kinds of officials and administrators in certain cases, especially among the tribes and localities situated at remote distances from Medina or were recent converts to Islam and required instructions in Islam and Islamic laws. All these officials constituted a rudimentary form of provincial administration under the Holy Prophet.

The Provinces. In course of the unification of the Peninsula, the Holy Prophet divided it into a number of provinces according to the divisions of the country as shown by its past history and geography. They were the provinces of Medina (the home province of the new Islamic State and therefore, it did not have a governor), Khayber, Mecca, Taif, Tayma, Sana, Yeman (Najran), Bahrayn, Uman, and Hadramawt (the region of Kindah).

The Wali. Each Province was placed under a governor, called

Wali. He was appointed by and responsible to the Holy Prophet. He performed the same functions within his region as the Prophet did in Medina, except prophetic. He was the imam or the leader of the public prayers, the chief commander, the judge and administrator. His chief duties were to preserve peace and order in his province and to propagate the observance of the rites and duties of Islam. He collected zakat and other taxes and despatched their proceeds to Medina. The Holy Prophet made the appointment of a governor after a careful scrutiny of the character and capacity of the candidates for this important post.

The Amils. Besides the governors, the Prophet also appointed Amils in each tribal area to collect zakat or poor-tax and sadaqat or voluntary alms. Only men of sterling character, honesty and integrity were chosen for this responsible job.

The Qazi. While the Prophet was the chief judge in Medina, he deputed a number of men to act as judges in remote places or provinces. Thus Ali and Muadh bin Jabal were appointed as judges or Qazis. These appointments were made on the basis of their learning, integrity and uprightness. As the Prophet instructed Muadh bin Jabal, the Qazi was to decide cases, firstly, on the basis of the injunctions of the Quran, secondly, according to the "Sunnah" or Tradition of the Prophet, thirdly, after consultation with the general body of the Muslims, and if none were available, then, lastly, in accordance with his individual reason and opinion. These four principles of the Quran, Sunnah, *Ijma* or opinion of the Muslims in general and *Ijtihad* or personal opinion, became the four bases of Islamic jurisprudence or *Fiqh*.

The Revenue System, Pre-Islamic Arabia never knew of a centralised government and, therefore, had no knowledge of public finance. The Holy Prophet was the first to set up a centralised State and an organised financial system. He was the first to institute a public treasury in Medina. Islam sanctioned five sources of revenue to the State. They were: (1) Zakat and Sadaqat; (2) Jizya; (3) Kharaj; (4) Khums or royal fifth of the spoils of war; and (5) Al-Fay. They become the five traditional taxes, sanctioned by Islam.

(1) Zakat and Sadaqat. The Zakat was the poor tax, imposed on all Muslims. Its payment was obligatory for all Muslims, and no excuse or exemption was ever accepted by the Prophet. It was the biggest source of revenue of the State. It was assessed at the fixed rate of $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the produce of the land and of precious metals, jewels, and cattle. The Prophet reserved pastures for the camels, goats and sheep given as zakat, which became State property. The Sadaqa was the voluntary alms, given by the Mustims. The proceeds of the zakat and sadaqat were utilised to feed, clothe and main-

tain the poor, the needy, the widows and the orphans.

(2) *Jizya*. Al-Jizya was the capitation-tax imposed on the non-Muslims (*i*) in lieu of the zakat and (*ii*) as the price of protection afforded to their lives and properties by the Islamic State. It was levied at the rate of one dinar a year from every able-bodied male non-Muslim. Women, children, the aged, the inform and the insane were not required to pay this tax.

(3) *Kharaj*. It was the land-tax, imposed on the non-Muslim cultivators and landlords. It was levied upon the Jews of Khayber and was equal to one-half the produce of the Jewish lands of Khaybar, and other places, as they submitted to the Prophet on the Prophet on the condition to pay Kharaj. The Prophet sent Abdullah bin Rawahah to Khaybar to collect Kharaj from the Jews. Besides the poor and the needy, the Kharaj was spent to equip Muslim soldiers with the sinews of war.

(4) *Khums*. The spoils of war captured by the Muslims from their enemies on the battle-field was distributed among them after deducting one-fifth as the share of the State. This was the royal fifth or *Khums* of *Al-Ghanimah* or the spoils of war, which was a source of State revenue, as laid down by the Quran. The Prophet divided it into three portions, one for himself and his relatives, the other for the poor and the needy and the third for the general good of the Muslim community.

(5) *Al-Fay*. Al-Fay were the lands conquered by Muslims, which became the property of the Islamic State or crownlands. The produce of these lands were the revenue of the State as their land-owner. The Jewish land of Fadak was the best example of the Fay-land in the days of the Prophet. The income from the Fay-land was distributed among the Prophet's relatives, the orphans, the poor, the wayfarer and for the general good of the Muslim community.

Military Organisation. The Prophet was the Commander-in-Chief of the Muslim forces. Every adult male Muslim was a soldier. Every military expedition was commanded either by the Prophet himself ot by some one expressly appointed by him. At first the Muslim forces were small detachments, but in later years of the Prophet's life, they consisted of large numbers. The expedition of Tabuk consisted of 30,000 soldiers. Strict discipline was maintained among them and a very high ethical code of conduct was enjoined upon each soldier. Breaches of discipline were strictly punished. There was no standing army. When a military expedition was to be sent, summons were issued to the allied tribes and to the Muslims in general to assemble for this purpose.

Military Divisons. Muslim armies consisted of infantry, cavalry and archers. As was the military tradition, the army was divided into five military units or divisions, called the "*Khamis*" or the Five. They were the Centre, the Right and Left flanks, the vanguard and the rearguard. A reserve, comprising the cavalry, was usually kept in the rear to be used at the critical juncture in the battle. The rearguard consisted of archers, while the two flanks were generally covered by the cavalry.

Army formation. Each military unit was a column of three or four "lines", called "*Safuf*". The first "line" consisted of lancers, who awaited the enemy attack, to be repulsed by their lances. Behind the lancers was a line of the archers, who shot their arrows at the advancing enemy. After the lencers had hurled their javelins and spears, and the archers had shot their arrows, a hand-to-hand fighting ensued. The moment the enemy showed signs of defeat or retreat, the cavalry charged him "and obtained from the enemy what God willed".

Tribal basis. The Muslim armies under the Prophet were organised on the basis of tribes. Each unit consisted of a tribe, usually fighting under its own chief. Each tribe had its own tribal ban er, borne aloft by its bravest member. The Prophet had always his own banner, black or green in colour. When he ordered an expedition, this banner was planted in the Mosque to rally the Muslims under it.

The Weapons. At first the Muslim soldiers were very deficient in the necessary weapons of war. But after the Battle of the Ditch, as the fortunes of Islam improved, more and better weapons were available. A Muslim foot-soldier was equipped with a sword, a bow and arrows, a sling and a javelin. The horsemen carried a lance and spears, as well as a long sword. The Muslims possessed little or no siege-weapons.

Tactics. The Prophet always personally arrayed his armies most carefully on the field of battle. The commanders and soldiers were instructed how to await the enemy advance before shooting their arrows or throwing their jovelins. No premature or precipitious action was permitted. On the other hand, the enemy's approach was to be awaited with perfect calm and confidence till he came within striking distance when a swift but determined action was to be made. Qualities of discipline, calm and courage of the Muslim soldiers were the real secret of their success against their more numerous and better equipped enemies. This discipline and tactics were the real achievements of the Prophet's leadership and instruction.

Educational System. Though himself illiterate, the Holy Prophet was an ardent advocate of the pursuit of knowledge and education. The search for knowledge was enjoined both by the Quran and the Prophet. He always commanded the Muslims to acquire knowledge. "Seek knowledge, even though you have to go to China", "The ink of the scholar is more sacred than the blood of the martyrs;" "He who leaves his home in search of knowledge walks in the path of God," are some of his famous sayings. In fact, his first care after his victory over the Quraysh at Badr was to grant freedom to those literate captives who would teach the art of reading and writing to the Muslims.

Education in Pre-Islamic Arabia. Certain educational institutions existed in Pre-Islamic Arabia. But they were mostly for poetical and rhetorical contests. The Ukaz fair might well be regarded as the "Pan-Arabian literary congress," as Dr. Mohammad Hamidullah puts it. Certain elementary schools existed among many Arab tribes, like Hudhayl near Mecca, the Thaqif of Taif, while the Quraysh of Mecca had a large number of men who knew the art of reading and writing.

Schools under the Prophet. Educational institutions in the real sense were established by the Holy Prophet after his migration to Medina. In the battle of Badr, the Muslims captured several Quraysh who knew the art of reading and writing. They were set free on the condition of each teaching script and grammar to ten Muslim children. Since then literacy and education spread rapidly among the people of Medina. Shools were founded in the Mosques of Medina which became both the places of worship and educational institutions. Thus nine mosque-schools came into being in Medina. Among them the mosque school of Quba, a suburb of Medina, was the most important, which the Prophet himself visited to hold discussions and discourses with the pupils. The women were also instructed side by side with men. The Prophet used to say that even the salve-girls must be educated and then set free. Every "mohalla''had its elementary school for little children and girls.

When Islam spread over the whole Peninsula, the Prophet sent teachers or *mu'allim* to teach the Quran to the Bedouin tribes.

Higher Centres of Learning. Besides the schools, a number of higher centres of learning also came into being. Among them the residential institution at Saffa, beside the Mosque of the Holy Prophet, was the most famous. Here lectures were given on the Quran and other Islamic books. It was also the place where the young and old students also dwelt. Ubada bin Samit was the principal of this institution.

Courses and Methods of Study. The basic aims of education in early Islam were, firstly, to impart knowledge of the Quran and instruction in the Faith, and, secondly, to mould the habits and character of the pupils in the morality of Islam. Hence, unlike the pre-Islamic system of education, the mosque-schools of early Islam did not teach rhetorics and poetry, but prescribed the reading of the Quran, Arabic grammar and the art of writing. The Quran formed the general basis for study and the pupils were required to memorise it by heart. After this, they practised calligraphy. The students of the higher educational institutions were further instructed in Arithmetic, Geneology, Physics, Medicine, and the principles of Islamic Law. Apart from intellectual instruction, the Holy Prophet laid particular stress upon physical education. The pupils were taught archery, wrestling, etc. The governors and other officials in the provinces set up and supervised educational institutions within their areas. In brief, the Holy Prophet taught knowledge, not for the sake of knowledge, but for the sake of Islam.

Huffaz and Qurra. As education and training consisted mainly of learning by heart, memory work was the most important duty of the pupils and students. Many of them learnt the Holy Book by heart and became the "Huffaz" and "Qurra". They were held in high esteem by the general body of the Muslims. Often the Huffaz were sent as teachers of the Quran and Islam in various parts and provinces of Arabia. Among these learned ones the names of Muadh bin Jabal, Ubada bin Samit, Abu Darda are worthy of notice.

Study of Foreign Languages. One of the most remarkable features of the educational system under the Holy Prophet was the study of foreign languages. It was necessary for correspondence with foreign rulers and princes and to conclude treaties with them. It was also necessary for the work of the intellingence officers whom the Prophet posted in other cities and foreign lands. Several of the secretaries of the Prophet knew foreign languages. Zayd bin Thabit had learnt Persian, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Abdullah bin Zubayr was equally proficient in several foreign tongues.

Respect for Teachers. The teachers were held in very great respect by the Prophet and the early Muslims. Often the governors of the provinces were chosen from among them. The Prophet once said that the teachers are "the perfection of mankind". He further remarked: "Verily, they are my successors".

Nature of the "Islamic State" under the Prophet.

At the time of the rise of Islam, Arabia was not a political entity, but only a geographical expression. It was inhabited by innumerable tribes, each one of which was a self-contained, auto-

nomous and independent political unit, under its own tribal chief, laws and customs. All the Arab tribes were constantly at war with each other, recognising no superior over them. Pre-Islamic Arabia stood, as the Holy Quran describes the Jahiliya conditions, "on the brink of a pit of fire". The Holy Prophet saved the Arabs and their land from these disastrous conditions by building an Islamic State and society in place of the pre-Islamic tribalism.

We shall now briefly describe the nature of the Islamic State under the Prophet.

(1) *Sovereignty of Allah.* Islamic State was essentially a religio-political state. All sovereign power or supreme authority was derived from and exercised in the name of Allah. All those who had accepted Islam had submitted themselves to the Will of God as revealed through the Quran. As God says : "And this your community is one community and I am your Lord, therefore, be careful of your duty" (Holy Quran : 23 : 52). Thus the Sovereignty of Allah replaced the sovereignty of the warring tribal chiefs. It created a unified community or Ummah in place of conflicting tribal units.

(2) *Supremacy of the Divine laws* . The political unity of the new Islamic State was further cemented by the supremacy of the Divine laws of Islam which replaced the pre-Islamic tribal customs and traditions. All believers were to submit to the Will of God as embodied in His laws, revealed through the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Thus one important source of pre-Islamic tribal conflicts was removed when all the Arabs submitted to a single and uniform system of Islamic law. Diversity of tribal customs and loyalties was replaced by the unity and uniformity of one divine code of laws of Islam. This fact in itself was highly conducive to the establishment of *Pax Islamica*.

(3) *Pax Islamica or the Islamic Social security system.* Islam also transformed the system of social security , this is, the maintenance of law and order and the defence of the rights and interests of the individuals. It created a new system of social security, which may be called *Pax Islamica*. In pre-Islamic days, the life, property and honour of an Arab were protected by his own tribe but this protection did not fully guarantee the security of life and rights of the pre-Islamic Arabs owing to the anarchy, confusion, bloodshed and wars of pre-Islamic Arabia. Islam replaced the tribal social security system by the wider and more effective social security of Islam, under the law and sovereignty Allah and the administration of His Prophet. This socio-political order was based on the equality and brotherhood of all the Believers and the injunctions of Islam, forbidding bloodshed and mutual raids of plunder and

inculcating respect for the life, property and honour of fellow Muslims. The new system of social security was not based on birth and kinship as the earlier tribal system was, but on community of belief, faith and loyalty to Allah, Islam and the Prophet. The Pax Islamica embraced the whole of Arabia. It wiped out all earlier tribal barriers and parochial loyalties. It thus erected a single socio-political system of peace and security for all Arabs, regardless of birth and kinship, place or origin.

The new Ummah or Islamic community enjoyed "a high degree of security of life and property both from enemies without and enemies within."

Its Administrative System. The national unity of the Islamic State and society did not fully transcend the pre-Islamic tribalism. Islam made Arabia a nation politically but not administratively and socially. The new Islamic State till continued to consist of tribes and clans for administrative, social and economic needs and purposes. Islam brought about a political, religious and moral revolution, but not a social and economic one. The tribes continued to be a social, economic and administrative units of the Islamic State and nation of Arabia, as before. The laws and commands of Islam were enforced through tribal chiefs or through the residents, teachers, tax-collectors and other agents of the Holy Prophet, sent by him to individual tribes for the purpose of enforcement of the Islamic laws and for the maintenance of peace and order within the tribe or locality.

This administrative system was necessitated by the geographical conditions of the Arabian Peninsula. Arabia of the days of early Islam was a vast Peninsula, with a sparse population, scattered over great distances. Such a country, with a tribal population, could not be administered by a police, directed and supervised from a single centre. In fact, there was no police at all. Social security, *i.e.*, law and order were maintained through the tribal chiefs and leaders, either directly responsible for it to the Holy Prophet in Medina or indirectly through his 'representatives' deputed to the tribes or locality. In case a tribe refused to obey the Prophet or Islamic laws and injunctions or revolted against the Islamic State, the Prophet despatched a military contingent against it to restore it to allegiance and submission. Within the tribe, the tribal chiefs and leaders or the Prophet's "representatives" were to see that violation of Islamic rules and injunctions against life and property were punished as required by Islam. Furthermore, there were no permanent military forces, stationed or garrisoned at any place in the Peninsula as a sort of para-military police force, except temporarily in such remote places as the Yeman.

A "Super-tribe. These conditions fully illustrate the nature of the Islamic State. The new Islamic community or Ummah was a nation but partially so. It was not a nation or a nation-state in the modern sense of these terms, which imply a complete uniformity of common way of life and institutions within the geographical boundaries of the state. Islamic State was a community unified by religion and common allegiance to a single spiritual sovereign, Allah, and a temporal Head of the State, the Holy Prophet. But socially, economically and administratively it was still a community of tribes. It was really a sort of "super-tribe" or a tribe of tribes, in which the parochical bond of tribal kinship was replaced by a wider bond of the community of Faith, based on the racial unity of the Arabs as a whole. As such, it was a source of great strength in the conditions that prevailed in Arabia and the world of the Seventh Century of the Christian Era, as the subsequent history of Islam illustrated so abundantly.

Social Life and Changes under the Prophet.

Social Crisis of Pre-Islamic Arabia. Islam arose at a time when Arabia was confronted with social crisis of utmost severity. In a more fortunate land, with abundance of fertile soil and natural resources, this crisis would have been overcome without much prolongation of social disturbance. But Arabia had none of these natural advantages. It was a barren land with meagre resources. Hence its social crisis was protracted over a long period of three centuries or so, aptly called the Jahiliya or the Age of Ignorance. This crisis, which began during the 4th Century A. D., was due to (*i*) the break-down of the pristine nomadic tribalism of ancient Arabia, based on the natural economy of the pastoral and nomadic tribes, (*ii*) the introduction of the money economy by the rising mercantile tribes, like the Quraysh of Mecca, the Thaqif of Taif and the Yemani tribes of the South, and (*iii*) the growing individualism of the Arabs, caused by the break-down of the communistic and matriarchal tribalism and family-structure of old and the enrichment of a number of families and individuals who ceased to depend for their livelihood upon the common property of their tribes or clans.

The forces of social changes were determined and propelled by the rise of three different social systems which then arose in the Peninsula of the Jahiliya Period. They were the new mercantile tribes of the towns, the old pastoral nomads of the desert and the agrarian tribes of a few straggling village-communities. There was much in common among these three systems or groups regarding their social habits, customs, traditions and institutions, which produced among them an Arab way of life and society. However, a great diversity existed from tribe to tribe and place to place in respect of

such institutions as family, marriage, inheritance, social behaviour, manners, property, barter and sale, etc. These local and tribal differences were emphasised all the more with the increasing wealth and power of the mercantile tribes and enterprising individuals, especially in the towns and agrarian village-communities. These conditions upset the old social and moral beliefs and practices, customs and habits of the earlier communistic nomadism. In short, the money economy and the individualism completely undermined the social life and order of old Arabia. Nevertheless, these social forces were not strong enough to overthrow the natural economy and communistic society of the Arabian nomadism. Such a social change could be consummated either by the complete prevalence of the money economy over the whole of Arabia, or by feudalisation. Money economy would harness the nomadic tribes as settled communities of craftsmen and producers, slaves and workmen of the social order, as it happened in Rome and Greece. Feudalisation of the agrarian tribalistic villages, like Yathrib, Fadak Khaybar and other, would have spread feudal way of life over the whole of the Peninsula. But feudalisation of agrarian communities, or the spread of Feudalism was not possible in the barren and desert land of Arabia. In fact, these agricultural communities remained isolated, weak and powerless in face of the vast sea of Bedouin nomdism around them and the powerful mercantile tribes arrayed against them. Moreover, these agricultural communities themselves had no uniform agrarian civilisation and culture. They were inhabited by the Jews, the Christians and the pagan Arabs, with their own social and socio-economic institutions, customs and beliefs. Thus the pre-Islamic Arabia was unable to emerge from the social crisis into a new social order of feudalism or of the mercantile economy, as they did in Persia or Rome.

Process of Social Disintegration in Pre-Islamic Arabia. Nevertheless, the pre-Islamic Arabia of the Jahiliya Period was in the throes of a deep and violent crisis. The ancient tribal society was disintegrating under the stress and strain of money economy of the mercantile tribes and the growth of individualism. Both were closely related and interdependent forces. In the ancient tribalism of Arabia, the property, like pastures, etc., were held in common by the whole tribe of clan, under the supervision of the tribal chiefs.

The mereantile tribes also behaved in the same way in respect of their commerce and wealth, which consisted of gold and silver coins and mercantile goods. But such a form of wealth could not be managed by the heads of the clans or tribes as were the pastures and other forms of communal wealth of the nomadic tribes. Commerical activities required personal and moral qualities (like shrewdness, intelligence, initiative and

risk) that differ from those required for the management of communal properties of a wandering tribe. Commercial undertakings are strictly personal and cannot be conducted by the constant consulatation and decision of the general body of the tribes as the management and defence of pasture lands, etc., require. Furthermore, the mercantile wealth, *i. e.* gold, silver, coins, and other merchandise, is earned or lost by the personal abilities and aptitudes of the "enterpreneur" and not by the common action and decision of a tribe or clan. The communal property of a tribe, like a pasture, is a free gift of nature and not a product of human effort or care. Its increase or diminution is a result of the forces of Nature, more or less beyond human will. But the wealth of a merchant is a result of the personal effort and initiative of one or more persons, interested in the undertaking. Moreover, the possession of mercantile wealth can be reduced to strictly personal terms, for gold and silver or coins can be easily concealed from others. This cannot be the case with the communal wealth of the Bedouin tribes. Lastly, the management of mercantile wealth necessarily falls into the hands of the bead of the family who inevitably turned it to his personal and family advantage as against the common good of the whole tribe, while the management of a pasture or other communal property of a nomadic tribe or clan could not be appropriated by the head of family or clan for his personal or family enrichment. This factor alone was responsible for the individualistic tendency among the mercantile tribes of pre-Islamic Arabia.

The individuation of the ancient tribal socity of Arabia was a social phenomenon true of all the tribes, whether of the desert or of the towns or village-communities. Only it was most prominent among the mercantile tribes, like that of the Quraysh and least so among the Bedouin tribes of the desert. The money economy of the Quraysh of Mecca split them into several clans and families, each one of which combined with the other according to its economic and political interest. Even the women, who had no independent source of income in the nomadic and pastoral tribes of the desert, could undertake commercial activities on their on behalf among the Quraysh. Thus they could earn and possess wealth independently of their menfolk. It was a clear proof of individualistic tendencies in the Arab society. In short, money acted as a solvent of the communalistic tribal society of Ancient Arabia, setting individuals free from old tribal bonds, yet incapable of giving birth to a newer, better and higher social order. This protracted social crisis was brought to an end by the social changes and reforms of Holy Prophet.

Islamic Social Security System. In pre-Islamic Arabia, the

security of life and property was guranteed as far as possible by the tribe, which was the age-old social and political unit in the Peninsula. It was based on the ancient tribal custom of "an eye for and eye and a tooth for a tooth". If any person killed another fellow-member of the tribe, the aggrieved family or next-of-kin could seek vengeance to the number of the person or persons killed. But this principle had several flaws, which became the cause of endless feuds within a tribe, and often led to the break-up of tribe into sub-tribes and clans. Firstly, the vengeance might not stop at the exact retaliation, but might exceed the original crime. Secondly, the principle of blood for blood would weaken the tribe by the loss of at least two of its members, not to speak of several deaths and unending feuds and disunity among its various families and clans. It was to obviate such evil results that the principle of paying blood-money was evolved in ancient Arabia. But this principle failed to work when the aggrieved party insisted on taking blood rather than blood-money or refused to accept the 'value' of one person killed in vengeance as equal to its murdered member. The result was that the principle of eye for eye and tooth for tooth became a source of intra-tribal feuds and dissensions. It was all the more so when the two parties belonged to two different tribes. In this case there could be no question of taking blood-money for the murder of a member of the tribe, till it had not inflicted equal, if not greater, injury on the other tribe. Hence quarrels, feuds and wars between two or more tribes were the necessary consequences of every murder or injury or insult to the person or property of any one of the Arab tribes. These wars of the Age of Ignorance were the cause of insecurity, bloodshed and strifes of the Ayyam ul Arab or Wars of the Ignorance. In the long run, these inter-tribal feuds and wars were concluded by counting the number of dead on both sides, with the blood-wit paid by the party with lesser losses to the party with the greater number of the dead to the extent of the surplus. Often the rate of assessing the blood-wit was 100 camels for the chiefs of the tribes and lesser number for ordinary members of the tribes.

Islam did not radically change this system of social security, for it could not be discarded altogether in the social and political conditions of the Arabia of the Seventh Century. The Holy Prophet had no police force to forbid all blood-revenge by kinship groups and ensure the safety of life and property by police and administrative action of the morden State. He was however, deeply interested in putting an end to all blood feuds between families and tribes and to guarantee the security of life and property of all individuals throughout the Peninsula. He

achieved this aim by combining the feature of the old tribal system of social security with some new features of Islamic dispensation. First of all, he declared that all Muslims were brethren, forbidded to kill each other. Secondly, in case a Muslim kills another, the family or kinship group of the murdered person and not the tribe or clan as such, would take vengeance on the principle of blood for blood but no more, or take blood-money at the rate of 100 camels for one person, or would forgive the crime altogether which was a better recompense in the eyes of God than the other two alternatives. These principles recongnised, firstly, the equality of all Muslims in regard to vengeance and compensation, secondly, the responsibility of the family and not of the tribe for revenge, if at all required, and thirdly, the religious implication of not seeking revenge at all. This type of social security system was acceptable to the Arabs, for they were accustomed to it. It was really an improved version of the system which prevailed in Arabia at that time. It also suited the tribal society of Arabia which did not and could not vanish from the Peninsula. As we said above, in spite of the deep social crisis, Arabia could not evlove any social order higher than the tribal system of primitive times.

The new social system worked efficiently in all desert and semi-desert lands in which Islam spread after the great conquests of the subsequent ages. It was on this basis that the jurists and judges built the great edifice of the Islamic Law and Fiqah of the Medieval Islam. It made murder and other crimes against life and property a personal responsibility of the murderer, who now could not, as he did before in the Jahiliya Period, take shelter behind the communal unity and responsibility of his tribe. Last of all, it enlarged the individual freedom of every Arab, for now he could go beyond his tribal boundaries without fear of being molested. This fact enhanced the social mobility of the Arabs by extending it from tribal limits to the political boundaries of *Pax Islamica*, which were conterminous with the Arabian Peninsula in the days of the Holy Prophet, and with the farthest limits of the Islamic Empire in days of the Caliphs after him. Such were the great dimensions of early Islam and the freedom and social mobility of the early Muslims. Nevertheless, this system of social security was not based on a full-fledged individualism of the modern type. The murdered person was not treated as an individual, directly and and solely under the protection of the State, for the State had no police force to punish the crime against him. The punishment was still the responsibility of his kinship group, that is, his family or the next-of-kin. In this way, the tribalistic principles of kinship and "blood for blood" were still recognised

as the very foundation of the Islamic system of social security. In short, although Islam lowered the barriers of tribalism, the barriers of fear and feuds of the tribalistic system of social security, and thereby and enlarged the freedom and social frequency of the Arabs as individuals, it did not entirely break down and wipe out the barriers of the tribalistic society, for the individual was still obliged to move within his kinship group or family, by which alone any injury to his person or property could be avenged.

Family and Marriage System of Islam. Chaos reigned in the sexual life of the pre-Islamic Arabs. Several forms of marriage and family life existed among the tribes which created confusion and instability in sexual relations. This fact in itself not only caused sexual irregularities and immodesties in the Jahiliya Period but also offered opportunity for the licentious and the powerful to indulge with impunity in sexual excesses, and vices. These were the causes of sexual irregularities and evils, so common in the Jahiliya Period.

Long before the advent of Islam, Arabian society was predominanty matriarchal, in which the group-life of the tribes was determined by kinship relations traced through the mother. Property was held in common, and was managed by the brother of the woman, who acted as the chief of the group or clan. Sexual relations were temporary, for the 'husband' visited the woman during the brief period when the two clans or tribes happened to be encamped near each other. The children born of this union belonged to their mother's clan. They were dependent upon their maternal uncle, and not upon their father, whose existence even was not recognised. These temporary sexual unions, however, assumed a variety of forms in course of time. Some of them were group-marriages of temporary duration between the men and women of the two different clans which happened to encamp near each other in a particular season of the year. Some of them were the single union between a man and a woman of two neighbouring clans, but of a temporary duration. Others were the sexual union between a woman and several 'visiting' husbands, but of a temporary nature, These forms of matriarchal unions were much abused, when the Arabian society of the Jahiliya Period was in transition from the primitive matriarchy to the emergent patriarchal system under the powerful influence of the social forces of money, individualism and private property. While many tribes still preserved the matriarchal system of the marriage, family and inheritance, there were several others which had become patriarchal in respect of marriage, family, ownership and inheritance. This state of affairs was particularly noticeable at the end of the Jahiliya period. The Quraysh of Mecca were a predominantly patriarchal tribe, while the Medinese tribes, Aus and Khazraj, were still matriarchal in many respects. A mat-

riarchal tribe, however, had no objection to receive 'visiting' husbands from patriarchal clans, especially if they brought with them presents and gifts for their "wives". An example of such a visiting husband is the marriage of Hashim to a woman of the Banu Najjar of Yathrib, when he was returning from a commercial mission from Syria and sojourned in Yathrib for some time. A son, named Shayba, born of this union and lived in his maternal clan till his uncle, Muttalib, literally purchased him, for his matriarchal clan was reluctant to part with him except for money. The boy Shayba returned to Mecca, the town of his father, but was taken for a slave of his uncle and was, therefore, named Abd-al-Muttalib. All this shows that the attitudes of the people of the matriarchal and patriarchal tribes towards questions of sex, marriage, family, property, inheritance, etc., were quite different and even opposite to each other. What appeared to be a respectable sexual relation in the eyes of the matriarchal tribes was not so in the eyes of the patriarchal tribes. Moreover, the temporary unions were abused as means of promiscuous matings, and even down-right prostitution by greedy men of the matriarchal clans who appropriated the gifts and offerings to the women for their personal use. Thus what was communal property was turned into personal property, which proved to be the undoing of the matriarchal system.

But the transition to the patriarchal system did not proceed in a consistent, continuous and effective manner in Ancient Arabia. The two social systems continued to exist together during the Jahiliya period, causing much confusion, chaos and many sexual irregularities and immoralities. The rise and spread of Islam put an end to these evils.

Islam stood for the patriarchal tribal and family system and, therefore, condemned or disapproved of the matriarchal group-marriages and temporary sexual unions of the 'visiting' husband types. Membership of the clan was determined by relationship through the father or the males, who naturally became the more important and dominant sex. Women were relegated to a secondary position and played a subordinate role as compared to their respectable and proud position in the earlier matriarchal system. However, the re-organisation of social life on a patriarchal basis enhanced the social dynamism of the new Islamic Society, for it freed men from the communal dependence on their clan and made them more enterprising and individualistic in respect of economic activities, inheritance and personal possession. These facts also enlarged the sphere of their social frequency which was now no longer confined to their clans or tribal groups but to much wider religio-political-group, called Ummah or Islamic community of believers. They now had the incentive to accumulate wealth, for they expected it to be inherited by their sons and other male relatives or descendants.

Women also gained to some extent from the patriarchal transformation of sex and family life. They had now the security of permanent marital relations. Though their husbands had greater power of divorce and dissolution of the marriage, nevertheless the Khula' or the divorce initiated by the wife, gave her an opportunity to be freed from an unwanted union. Thus the right of Khula' compensated for the loss of freedom and pride which patriarchalism so obviously entailed for women. The place of the woman in family and social life undoubtedly became secondary, but she could free herself from it, if it became intolerably harsh for her by seeking divorce. Khula was, indeed, one of the matriarchal practices which survived in the new Islamic society, for it was formerly the right of a woman to dismiss her 'visiting husband.'

Islam instituted polygamy of four wives. In itself it was an improvement on the earlier practice of innumerable wives a man could marry or 'visit'. It was an institution that was unavoidable in the socio-physical environment of the Arabian Peninsula—that is, the ascendancy of the patriarchal system in the barren and inhospitable land, where the weaker sections of society suffered terribly at the hands of Nature as well as of man. In such conditions polygamy was a boon and a refuge for women than a curse and a social degradation. Moreover, polygamy was the only remedy of the increasing number of widows and orphaned marriageable females which was the necessary consequence of the wars of early Islam. Nevertheless the fact remains that when the age of conquests and expansion came to an end and the age of social development and culture began, polygamy proved to be one of the most ruinous and deleterious institutions for the further development, stability and progress of the Islamic society and state. But this degeneration was to come about two centuries after the age of the Holy Prophet.

Like polygamy, early Islam also sanctioned concubinage or marriage with slave-girls—a man could marry any number of women his right hand had captured, as the Quran puts it. Like polygamy, it was also an unvoidable institution in the social milieu that existed in Ancient Arabia. In the ancient world, every country and nation was involved in a chronic warfare in which men and women were captured, who became slaves and concubines. However, the spirit of Islam was against this inhuman institution and it was the task of the later generation to condemn and prohibit it. But as they did not, concubinage proved to be as ruinous for Medieval Islam as polygamy.

Conclusion. Islam brought about an improvement in sex relations and family life, by instituting patriarchal practices and relations, by embodying some of the better features of the earlier matriarchy

and by putting an end to the earlier choatic conditions of sexual life and relations. Thus it put an end to the evils and ills of the Jahiliya period. This socio-sexual revolution soon expressed itself in the social dynamism of the Arab people. The patriarchal marriage and family system of Islam became the basis of greater freedom and social mobility of men and to a lesser extent of women as well. It granted them rights which they did not enjoy before and imposed upon them duties which they formerly did not perform. Nevertheless, it imposed greater restrictions on women, not only as women but also as human beings, which were later developed into the definite social institutions of Medieval Islam, like Harim, Purdah, concubinage, etc.

Economic System of Early Islam. Like its social, religious and political life, the economic life of Ancient Arabia was also choatic with three different socio-economic systems contending with each other, yet none gaining the upper hand. The most wide-spread, though no longer predominant system was the communistic, natural economy of the Bedouins, the Arabian Nomads. It was not due to any inherent strength of the system but due to the fact that the Peninsula was one huge desert of sand or barren rocks. Ordinarily no people but the nomads, with their common pastures and herds and their communal ownership and tribalistic life, could live in such an inhospitable environment and climate. There were a few villages or clusters of villages, like Medina, Khyber, Fadak, where agriculture was possible, but that only of the barest kind. Even in these agricultural villages of agrarian communities, socio-economic life was strictly tribal and communal. In both the nomadic and agrarian communities, the communal order was either matriarchal or patriarchal, depending upon whether the tribes' struggles were more against natural than against human enemies. If it had to struggle against natural factors such as the desert, etc., it was matriarchal in structure. But if it had to fight also against human enemies, such as the neighbouring hostile tribes, it changed from matriarchal to patriarchal organisation. During the Jahiliya period, matriarchal system was being gradually replaced by the patriarchal owing to the increasing warfare of the Arab tribes over the whole of the Peninsula. (Nevertheless, matriarchal customs and practices did survive among many nomadic and settled tribes.) The third economic system was that of the money economy and of commerce and finance, which existed among the commercial tribes, dwelling in the towns like Mecca, Taif, and in the Yemen. It was also tribalistic, but predominantly patriarchal, with strong trends towards social differentiation and individuation, *i.e.*, with strong tendencies towards the formation of smaller social groups and individualism. It was, indeed, an altogether new social phenomenon in Ancient Arabia. It was the most disturbing factor so far as the natural economy of the desert tribes and village communities was concerned, for it split up their communistic ownership

and organisation. Still it was very attractive to the hungry desert-dwellers and semi-starved village-communities, who were eager to sell whatever little surplus they could save or spare. Nevertheless, this money economy was rapacious, for it harnessed the natural economies in its toil of huge profits and an exorbitant rate of interest or usury, often going upto 50% and sometimes as high as 200%. The increase of money in the hands of the nomadic and agrarian tribes disrupted the matriarchal and communal system, for it encouraged personal ownership and patriarchal dominance of the male elders, who tended to limit communal property for their personal advantage or to their own family rather than for the good of the matriclan or matriarchal group. This fact also increased inter tribal and inter-clan tensions and disputes, which often led to tribal wars. This was the state of affairs in Yathrib, before the advent of the Holy Prophet into that city. Thus social choas, anarchy, divergences of social life and wide-spread social tensions, disputes and wars, engendered by the conflicting socio-economic practices and systems were the features of pre-Islamic Arabia.

As in other aspects, the Holy Prophet improved the socio-economic life of the Arabs. But in this respect, he did not bring about any revolutionary or radical change. In fact, Islam borrowed some of features of the existing matriarchal system but made the private ownership and the patriarchal system the dominant social order. Islam encouraged the private ownership of property in contrast to the communal ownership, under the matriarchal tribalism.

The Islamic law of inheritance is the best illustration of the continuation of the matriarchal and patriarchal system. It recognised the right of a female to inherit property of her relatives on both the paternal and maternal sides, though at half the rate of a male. Thus all the relatives of both the sides shared in the property at the time of inheritance, but on the principle that the paternal side came first. Only in the absence of paternal relations the maternal relation or relations who traced their claim through females could inherit the property of a deceased person. This principle, therefore, recognised that, firstly, property was to be confined to the kinship group, determined on patriarchal or male descent, the matriarchal or kinship through mother, coming only in the absence of relatives on the father's side. The patri-clan became the basis of Islamic society, but confined to the immediate family group of a father or grandfather. Secondly, within the family, the property was to be individually owned, though at the time of one's death, it was to be inherited by his or her descendants and collaterals and ascendants in accordance with their shares prescribed in the Quran, and not by his sons and/or daughters only, as it would be in a system of strict individual ownership. In this repect, Islam still preserved the prin-

ciple of tribal or communal ownership and did not give unconditional recognition to strictly private and personal ownership of property. The family or the immediate kinship group had a claim on the property of a person, and shared his or her property on his or her death. Thus early Islam gave no countenance to unalloyed individualism in property relations as is the case in the modern society.

Slavery in Early Islam. The institution of slavery was another socio-economic problem for early Islam. Slavery is, in fact, a composite social institution, for it is at once a socio-economomc, socio-sexual and socio-political institution. A slave is a political inferior, because militarily captured, a social inferior, an economic tool of production for his master and, in the case of women-slaves, a socio-sexual object as a concubine. The use of a slave for one or more of these purpose is determined by the social order existing in a country or society at the particular time. Arabia was not a land where a slave could be ecoomically exploited as a tool of production. But in the Jahiliya period it was a land noted for a brutal treatment of the few slaves employed as domestic servants or slave-girls. Early Islam brought about an improvement in their hard lot. It did not prohibit slavery. It could not abolish slavery as a social institution due to the socio-economic, technological and socio-political imponderabilia of the age. But it enjoined a kind treatment of the slaves. It also sanctioned concubinage or the socio-sexual utilisation of the female slaves. In the social conditions that prevailed in the tribalistic Arabia of those days, this sanction did not matter much, for the early Arabs were racially a proud people, among whom "purity of blood" and "pride of race" were highly valued, which acted as social deterrent to unrestrained concubinage. It was only in subsequent ages when Islam spread to other lands that this sanction had deleterious effects on Muslim society and character.

Ban on Usury. The prohibition of usury was another socio-economic reform of early Islam. The merchants and bankers of the Jahiliya period charged very high rate of interest on their money advances, to the detriment of their debtors, who were often unfortunate persons or simple-minded Bedouins. To this extent the prohibition of interest or usury brought about a salutary amelioration in the life of ancient Arabs. But it had also depressing effect on the economic life of later Muslims, which became operative only after spread of the Islamic way of life to other lands. Nevertheless, this prohibition diverted Arab energy into new fields of action and achievement. The Quraysh and other merchantile tribes now turned from commerce and trade to conquest and administration. The early Arabs became a race of warriors and rulers. Though their empire extended from Sind to Spain, they did not take to commercial activities again. They left these to their subject peoples, who were, at first, non-Muslims or Dhimmis.

The institution of the Islamic calendar was another socio-economic change of early Islam. The Holy Prophet forbade the intercalation of months which was the practice among pre-Islamic Arabs in order to adjust their lunar calendar to a solar one. So long as Islamic society remained pastoral, natural and tribalistic, as it was in its early days, the Islamic lunar calendar remained a useful and simple way of determining time. It was only when a more complex agrarian and commercial society arose in the later ages that the need for a solar calendar was felt by the medieval Muslims of non-Arab lands. They met this need by adopting the Persian or local calendars prevalent in their countries.

Feudalism. Early Islam was not feudalistic. Arabia is not a land suitable for feudal society. Nevertheless, we find rudimentary beginnings of feudalism in the days of the Holy Prophet which were later developed into the tribalistic feudalism of the Orthodox Caliphate. After the capture of Khayber and other Jewish and Christian settlements in Northern Arabia, the Holy Prophet imposed Kharaj or land-tribute on the Jewish cultivators of Khyber, Fadak, etc., the proceeds of which were to be distributed among the Muslims.

The Nature of the Islamic Revolution. After this brief survey of the reforms and changes of early Islam, let us consider briefly the nature of the revolution it brought about in the life and society of the ancient Arabia. "As a prophet and reformer of his people," writes von Kremer, in his 'Cultural History of the Orient' (p. 55 Khuda Bukhsh's translation), "Mohamed could not be otherwise than a revolutionary in the fullest sense of the word." But Islam did not bring about a total revolution. However, it caused many revolutionary changes in the life and society of the Arabs. In fact, it was a religion of compromise, incorporating salutary features of the existing customs and practices. The Jahiliya Period had witnessed a socio-cultural revolution which had given birth to Arabian poetry, language, and Arab racialism, which unified the diverse warring tribes of Ancient Arabia into a single cultural unit, so far as culture and racial homogeneity were concerned. Early Islam accepted this transformation and built its social order on this basis, by bringing about a socio-political revolution in its turn. It unified the Arab tribes into a single community, based on allegiance to a single religion and a single political centre at Medina. This was the Islamic Ummah, a sort of super-tribe. The tribes became the administrative and military units of the Islamic Ummah.

As regards the socio-economic system, early Islam introduced several reforms and ameliorations. It did not, however, bring about a socio-economic revolution. The reason was that the ancient civilisation of Arabia was a spontaneous civilisation, based on

natural economy, in which man-determined forces and factors of economic production did not play any significant role. The tools and techniques, the animals and forces of production which the Arabs knew were too weak and backward to harness the forces of Nature in a dynamic manner. Man was still a slave rather than a master of Nature. Lastly, by bringing uniformity in social life, and property relations on a family and personal basis, Islam discouraged the communal and tribal system on which nomadic life depended. In this way, it encouraged the Arabs to take to a settled life, as opposed to Bedouin nomadism. Thus Islam encouraged the tendency towards settled society in place of the chaotic and predatory tribal nomadism of the Jahiliya period. A uniform social order for the whole of Arabia, based on private property, patriarchal family, and respect for the individual, was one of the greatest achievements of the Holy Prophet and early Islam.

Social Dynamism of Early Islam. The reforms and changes of early Islam were productive of a great dynamic force among the early Muslim Arabs. Early Islam encouraged individualism, which was already developing among the Jahiliya Arabs, though among them it was a source of social injustice and disruption. By organising Arab society on a patriarchal basis, Islam encouraged the individualism of the male as a father and head of the family. Furthermore, by recognising polygamy and prohibiting the chaotic practices of matriarchy, it encouraged men to maintain large families of their own and to be active in collecting wealth and property which was in their exclusive ownership. Women, who could not contribute any productive force of their own, were reduced to a secondary position of the reproductive role. That is why they had a share in family property. but only half that of the male. Thus the pattern of Islamic family became polygynous and patriarchal, which stimulated the male to utmost social energy and action, in order to produce and acquire the economic necessaries and comforts of life. It was this force which directed the early Muslims into the fields of conquest and settlement in foreign lands, soon after the death of the Holy Prophet. It was also responsible for the conquests and unification of Arabia under the Prophet himself.

Finally, by its uniformity of culture and society, political unity and socio-economic initiative and opportunity, Islam enlarged the sphere of the social mobility of the Arabs, which was another dynamic factor in early Islam.

The Civilising Role of Islam in World History. This social dynamism remained the historic feature of Islam throughout its later history. The dynamic transformation was repeatedly illustrated by the spread of Islam among other tribal peoples, like the Berbers of North Africa, the Turks of Central Asia and the

Mongols of Changez Khan. It revolutionised the social and political life of these tribal peoples, unified them into a single force, infused into them a new spirit by bringing about a socio-political revolution in their former chaotic and conflicting tribal life and society and thus launched them on a course of conquest, expansion and colonisation of new lands, just as Islam had transformed the Arabs in the 7th Century A.D., under the Orthodox Caliphate. Islam had thus played a historic role in transforming these nomadic, tribal peoples of the Deserts into settled, ubran communities of the Sown. Thus the civilising role of Islam lay in the transformation of nomadism into the settled, urban civilisation of the Middle Ages from Morocco to Turkestan.

PART II

THE ORTHODOX CALIPHATE

BEGINNINGS OF TRIBAL FEUDALISM

632—661 A.D./11—41 A.H.

ABU BAKR: The First Caliph

632—34 A.D./11—13 A.H.

CHAPTER 13

ELECTION OF ABU BAKR

Medina at the time of the Prophet's Death.—The Holy Prophet died on the 8th June, 632. It was a most critical moment in the history of the young Republic of Medina now left without a leader, a prophet and head of the state. While the Companions of the Holy Prophet were yet mourning his death, news reached Abu Bakr that some people of the Ansar had assembled in a quarter of Medina, called *Saqifa Bani Sa'ida* to choose someone from among themselves as a successor of the Prophet. The information compelled Abu Bakr to take a speedy action before the matter became unmanageable.

Political Situation in Medina.—At this stage it would be useful to know the political situation in Medina at the time of Prophet's death. Broadly speaking the citizens of Medina were then divided into two groups, namely, the **Muhajireen** and the **Ansars**. An overwhelming majority of the Muhajireen were Qurayshites or the fellow-tribesmen of the Holy Prophet. Most important among them were the first emigrants, about 313 in number, who had accepted Islam in Mecca and left their birthplace due to the cruel persecutions of the Quraysh leaders. However as a group they had no unity among themselves when the question of choosing a successor of the Prophet arose. On this issue they were divided into three parties, namely, the Orthodox Muslims, the supporters of Ali's claim to succession, and the Umayyad group.

The **Orthodox Muslims** comprised the majority of the Muslims at that time. They had fought under the Prophet against the enemies of the Prophet and Islam. They were the companions of the Prophet, headed by his leading Companions. At this time they were led by Abu Bakr and Umar. Besides these two, they included such Chief Companions as Abu Ubaydah al-Jarrah, Abdur Rahman bin Auf, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, etc. They constituted the nucleus of the Orthodox party which was trained in the teachings of the Quran and the practices of t e Prophet almost from the very beginning of the Prophet's mission. So when the Prophet departed from amongst them, the Chief Companions resolved to continue to tread in the path shown by him and uphold the rule of the Quran and the Sunnah

of the Prophet. But for this it was essential that they should also retain supreme power within the young Republic of Islam in Medina. If the unity of Islam as a religion was to be preserved the sovereignty of the Islamic State must be in hands of these who had been the closest companions and associates of the Prophet during his life as a prophet and as a ruler of Medina. This was the reason why Abu Bakr and Umar reacted promptly and vigorously to the news of the meeting of the Ansars in the Saqifa Bani Sa'ida.

Alides. The second group among the Muhajireen was that of Hazrat Ali and his supporters. They stood for the claims of Ali to succeed to the Headship of Islam after the death of the Prophet. They based this claim on Ali's kinship with the *Ahl al-Bayt* or the Family of the Prophet, being his first cousin and his son-in-law. This was the party of the Legitimists in early Islam. But at this stage their number was small and influence limited among the people of Medina, whether Muhajireen or Ansar, Quraysh or Bedouins. To say that at this particular juncture Ali was himself a candidate for the Headship of Islam was on the whole an exaggeration or rather an anticipation of subsequent developments and events. He was not a candidate for the caliphate but become more and more so as subsequent occasions for electing a new caliph arose. Only one reason would suffice here. Ali was at this time barely 33 years of age, much younger than Abu Bakr and Umar,—and age was an important consideration in the eyes of the Arabs.

The third group comprised of the **Umayyads**, headed at this time by Abu Sufyan. He had opposed the rise of Islam tooth and nail till further opposition became futile. Then, at last, at the time of the fall of Mecca (630), he adopted Islam and his wh le Umayyad clan followed suit. The Prophet, in order to "win their hearts" showed utmost consideration to his erstwhile opponents. Soon after the fall of Mecca the Umayyad clan "migrated" to Medina and thus joined the wider group of the Muhajireen. However their prolonged opposition to Islam had discredited them in the eyes of the earlier converts and more orthodox Muslims. So Abu Sufiyan and his party had little chance to put forth any claim to the headship of Islam, though they had their ambitions for it. They had ruled Mecca once and aspired to rule Medina sametime and thus regain their lost power and prestige. But at this particular juncture they dared not stretch their hands towards it. In short, if the Orthodax group claimed the Headship of Islam on the basis of orthodoxy, the Alides on the basis of kinship, the Umayyads did so on the basis of Meccan or Qurayshite aristocracy. Among these conflicting claims, that of the Othodox Muslims was the strongest, the greatest and the best for the unity of Islam as a religion and a state and also due to the unrivalled qualities of their great leaders, Abu Bakr, Umar and Abu Ubaydah.

Ansar. The fourth important group among the Muslims was that of the Ansar. They were the natives of Medina. As they invited and helped the Meccan migrants (Muhajireen), the Prophet styled them as "Ansar" or "Helpers". They had rendered great and singular services to the Prophet and Islam during the Prophet's life-time. At the time of his death they too aspired to the headship of the young Republic of Medina. They did so partly because of their past services to Islam, and partly due to the usual Arab desire to prevent the strangers, like the Muhajireen, to become the rulers in their own city. That is why as soon as they heard of the Prophet's death they assembled in one of their meeting-place, called Saqifa bani Sa'ida, to elect a successor of the Prophet. This shows that like the orthodox Muhajireen, they too accepted the custom of the Arab tribes to elect a chief in the general assembly of the tribe.

Aus and Khazraj. However, like the Muhajireen, the Ansar also were not united among themselves. They belonged to two tribes, the Aus and the Khazraj. Much hostility existed among them before the advent of Islam, which had subsided during the Prophet's ministry. But their rivalry came to the surface on the occasion of electing a successors of the Prophet and proved decisive in the election of Abu Bakr. The Aus tribe sided with the Muhajireen in electing Abu Bakr. They feared to support the claim of Sa'd bin Ubadah, the chief of the Khazraj tribe, to the sovereignty of Medina, lest he might use his political power to oppress them. Nevertheless, the Ansar also stood for the principle of free election by all the Believers for the Headship of the Islamic State.

Death of the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet died a little after the midday of the 8th June, 632 A. D. The news of his death spread rapidly through Medina and shocked all its inhabitants. Many of them flocked into the Mosque of the Prophet, still unbelieving that the Prophet could die. But Abu Bakr, hastily returning from Sunh, convinced them that the Prophet, like all mortals, had indeed died.

Hardly had the people turned their attention towards the last services to the Prophet when a man brought news to Umar that the Ansars were assembling in Saqifa bani Sa'idah to elect one of them as the successor of the Prophet. It was a news of utmost consequence for the unity and stability of the young Republic of Medina. Realising its importance for the future of Islam. Umar at once communicated it to Abu Bakr and the two promptly left the Mosque for the meeting-place of the Ansars. On the way they met Abu Ubaydah and took him also with them.

The Meeting at Saqifa bani Sa'idah. When the three Companions reached the Saqifa bani Sa'idah in the upper quarters of Medina, they found the Ansars loudly asserting their claim to the

sovereignty of Islam. Their speakers declared that a successor ought to be elected from among the Ansar because it was in their city that the Prophet and the Emigrants had taken shelter and it was with their swords that Islam was victorious. After this they had almost decided to choose Sa'd bin Ubadah, the chief of the Khazraj, as a successor of the Prophet, when the three Companions entered the Saqifa or the meeting-hall of Bani Sa'idah, a branch of the Khazraj. Umar, with his characteristic impetuosity, was about to address them when Abu Bakr made a sign to him to remain silent and addressed the gathering himself. In a calm and firm voice, Abu Bakr said to the Ansar that whatever they had said about themselves and their services to the Prophet and Islam was true and more than true. But the sovereignty of the Islamic State was a question of all the Arabs. The Quraysh were, in the eyes of the Arab tribes, superior to the Ansar in prestige and noble birth and, therefore, only to them, and not to the Ansar, the tribes of Arabia would willingly submit.

At this Hubab bin Manzar, one of the Ansar leaders, proposed a compromise that there be two Chiefs, one chosen from the Muhajreen and another from the Ansar. This suggestion was at once rejected by Umar; he said there could not be two sovereigns in one state. Moreover, the Arabs would accept no Chief except from among the Quraysh, the tribe of the Holy Prophet. Even Sa'd bin Ubadah, who was ill at that time and was lying covered with a blanket, cried that two Chiefs would not do. But Hubab bin Manzar angrily exchanged some hot words with Umar and even asked the Ansars to expel the Muhajreen from their City in case they refused to accept their rule. Abu Ubaydah al-Jarrah intervened and said, "O Ansar ! You were the first to uphold Islam. Do not be the first also to sow the seed of dissension in it." Then Abu Bakr, fearing lest the altercation took more serious turn, stepped forward and pointing towards Umar and Abu Ubaydah, said, "Here are the two Companions of the Prophet. Choose any-one of them as a Chief." But both cried at once, "You have already been chosen by the Prophet to lead the prayers. You have been his companion in the Mount Thaur. You are our Chief. Stretch forth you hand." And they both took the oath of allegi-ance at Abu Bakr's hand, thus saluting him as the successor or khalifa of the Prophet of God,—*Khalifat-ur-Rasul-Allah*.

At this stage mutual jealousies among the Ansar tribes came into play. Hubab constrained his Khazraj kinsmen from taking the oath of allegiance at Abu Bakr's hand by remarking, "Will you cut the throat of your own kinsmen, Sa'd bin Ubadah?" But his words roused the old jealously and apprehension of a leader of the Aus tribe, named Bashir bin Sa'd. He stepped forth and took the oath of fealty at Abu Bakr's hands, soon followed by all his Aus

kinsmen. Now the Khazraj also became apprehensive lest the Aus might take precendence over them. Therefore, groups after groups of them stepped forward to salute Abu Bakr as the Khalifa of the Holy Prophet. So great became the rush to take the oath of allegiance at Abu Bakr's hands that they even stepped on their leader Sa'd bin Ubaydah, who lay covered under a blanket. Thus was Abu Bakr elected Caliph by the Aus and Khazraj in the Saqifa bani Sa'idah. The three Campanions then returned to the Mosque and busied themselves in the burial of Holy Prophet.

Confirmation of the Election : Next day, on 9th June, 632, all the people in Medina assembled in the Mosque. After the funeral of the Holy Prophet commenced a general pledge-taking ceremony to confirm the choice of Abu Bakr the day before. Umar stood up and, after pointing out the merits of Abu Bakr, called upon the congregation to pay homage to him as the Khalifa of the Holy Prophet. All the people with one voice acclaimed him as Caliph and swore allegiance at his hands, called, *bayt.*

Inaugural Speech of Abu Bakr. Then Abu Bakr rose and addressed them in these words : "O people ! You have chosen me as your Chief, although I am not the best among you. I need all your advice and all your help. If I do well, support me ; if I make a mistake, then set me right. To tell to the ruler truly what you think of him is faithfulness ; to conceal the truth is treachery. I shall defend the weak against the strong, for the weaker amongst you is the stronger with me, until I have redressed his wrong, and the stronger shall be as the weaker until I have taken from him that which he has wrested. Fight in the ways of lord : whoever leaves off to fight in the path of Allah, Allah then abases him. As long as I obey God and His Prophet, obey me; wherein I disobey, obey me not."

Abu Bakr's inaugural speech was, indeed, a speech from the Throne of a new monarch, a manifesto of his caliphate. It announced his conception of the responsibilities of a Sovereign in Islam. It revealed his determination to follow the Quran and the Prophet in the business of the State, and to defend the weak and punish the evildoer.

Thus was Hazrat Abu Bakr elected as the first Caliph of Islam. But his election, through decisive, was not unopposed. We have already mentioned how Sa'd bin Ubadah and his supporters endeavoured to oppose it. Even after his election Sa'd never swore allegiance at Abu Bakr's hands and died a few days later.

The Question of Ali's Homage. There are also divergent accounts about Hazrat Ali's homage to Abu Bakr. According to

one account, he paid homage to Abu Bakr on the very day of popular acclamation. According to another version, he wavered and never took the oath of allegiance at all. But, according to a third version, he hesitated at first to do homage,but did so later, after the death of his wife. These divergent versions do not reveal historical truth so much as they indicate historical troubles yet to come. They are the shadows cast backward of the events and sentiments of later history of Islam. The truth seems to be that Hazrat Ali at first hesitated to do homage to Abu Bakr. At the time of the happenings in the Saqifa bani Sa'idah, he was busy with the funeral rites of the Holy Prophet in the Mosque. When told of Abu Bakr's election, he was at first a bit taken aback. But before he had taken the oath, an event occurred which restrained him from doing so for some time. It was the greivance of his wife, Fatima, against Abu Bakr, who refused to deliver the lands of Fadak to her as her patrimony. She never went to see Abu Bakr till her death six months later. After her death, Ali paid homage to Abu Bakr.

Significance of Abu Bakr's Election: Hazrat Abu Bakr's election as Caliph was accidental, yet it became momentous in its implications for the subsequent history of Islam. "It was", as Umar once remarked, "an event the happiest in its consequences for Islam, but justified only by the urgency of the moment." Many factors, however, converged towards this happy end. We have already delineated political divisions which led to his election. His piety, his loyalty and devotion to the Prophet and Islam were other reasons which made him acceptable to the Muslims. But besides these political and religious reasons, there was also the silent but subtle influence of the social customs of the Arabs, which inclined them towards the institution of elective caliphate. Long before the rise of Islam, the Arabs were accustomed to choose their tribal chiefs from among such of their men as were well-known for their courage, sagacity, age and position, as tested on the fields of battle and the counsels of the tribe. Abu Bakr possessed all these qualities of head and heart. He was the first among men to become Muslim, the closest companion of the Prophet, the father of one of his dearest wives, and the best man among the Muslims. Lastly, he belonged to the Quraysh tribe of the Prophet—a qualification which counted a lot among the Arabs.

In fact, Abu Bakr's election established two principles. Firstly, it established the elective principle of the headship of Islam as against the hereditary one. Hereditary chieftainship was repugnant to the democratic and egalitarian spirit of Islam. The Prophet himself, by his silence about his successor, impliedly supported the elective principle. It also conformed to the tribal custom of elective chieftainship. It became a precedent for all caliphs afterwards.

Even Muawiya, who changed the spirit of elective caliphate, could not change its form, for the outward ceremony of *bayt* or oath of fealty at the hands of the new caliph remained ever after.

Secondly, the election of Abu Bakr was universally accepted by the Muslims in Medina. This fact established the principle of the aceeptance of the new Caliph by the whole Muslim community. This acceptance was to be expressed by the taking of *bayt* or oath at his hands by all Muslims. Nevertheless, the principle of universal acceptance also became a cause of the political disputes which turned into sectrian dissensions of the later times. They became the causes of the transformation of the caliphal system under the Umayyads and the Abbasids. Yet, it was the principle which distinguished the Orthodox Caliphate from its two successors.

Its Critics: The election of Abu Bakr had also its critics, both medieval and modern, Muslim and European. Its earliest critics were the Shi'ites, who advocated a hereditary caliphate of the Ahl al-Bayt. In the eyes of the strict Shia of later times, the election of Abu Bakr was at best a successful *coup d'etat*, and at worse a usurpation, which only established a *de facto* sovereignty, unjustifiable both in law and faith. European critics of today point to the limited number of electors as a proof of its undemocratic and irregular nature. According to them, his election was the work of a small group of the Companions of the Prophet, and even of the coteric of three, viz., Abu Bakr himself, Umar and Abu Ubaydah al-Jarrah. They constituted the triumvirate who assumed political power on the death of the Prophet and resolved to retain it afterwards. In short, the caliphate was not open to all Muslims, but was a selective dictatorship of the triumvirate. This criticism really overshoots its mark. Orthodox Caliphate was not a parliamentary democracy of the present days. It was an elective govornment based on the consent of the governed, as expressed by its universal acceptance or "bayt". It embodied the spirit of the people both as Arabs and as Muslims.

CHAPTER 14

EARLY DAYS OF ABU BAKR'S CALIPHATE

No sooner was Abu Bakr elected than he was confronted with many difficulties and dangers. The Caliph, however, rose to the occasion and met the dangers with courage, resolve, devotion and loyalty to Islam. His method was simple. He was resolved to do as the Prophet would have done in similar circumstances.

Usama's Expedition.—The very first problem was to despatch or not Usama's expedition against the refractory tribes on Syrian borders. As we have noticed above, the Holy Prophet had ordered Usama to lead an expedition against them only a few days before his death. His last illness, however, delayed its departure. The army was still at Jurf, in the outskirts of Medina on the road to the Syrian borders. On hearing of the Prophets death, the soldiers returned to Medina. On the day of his election and general homage Abu Bakr instructed the army to assemble and encamp again at Jurf with a view to march against the Syrian tribes. But several Companions had misgivings about its despatch. Political horizon around Medina was darkening and reports were reaching the City of revolt and apostasy among the tribes of Arabia. News were even received of the movements of the Bedouin tribes in the vicinity of Medina, preparing to attack the Capital of Islam. In face of these besetting dangers, people around the Caliph advised him to retain the army in Medina for its defence against its enemies. They sent Umar to the Caliph with the request that either the expedition should not at all be sent or at least a more experienced general than Usama be appointed to command it. The Caliph rejected both requests. "The army shall go", he said, "even if I alone had to fight against the rebellious Bedouin. As regards Usama, I do not dare to dismiss a man whom the Prophet of Allah has himself appointed." And he added, "Medina may stand or fall; the Caliph may live or die, but the last words of the Prophet must be obeyed."

So, nineteen days after the death of the Prophet the army, commanded by Usama bin Zayd, left Medina. However, on Caliph's express request to the Commander, Umar stayed behind with the Caliph to advise and help him in the critical situation confronting him. The army reached the Syrian territory between Askelon and Jaffa, near the Mediteranean coast, occupied by

Banu Quza'a. It attacked the tribe near Ubna (ancient Jabna) and captured many prisoners. Then it marched back to Medina by the famous Wadi-al-Qarra without losing a single man. The whole campaign lasted for about forty days.

Its results.—Usama's expedition against the Syrian tribes was more an expression of faith and a *tour de force* than a military operation. It was a police action against the Byzantine Emperor. As Von Kremer writes "It struck terror into the roaming Bedouin tribes of the North of Medina and returned with a rich booty of live-stock. It further strengthened the courage of the people of Medina and depressed that of the insurgent tribes." A proof of its effiectiveness was fonnd in the fact that the tribes north of Medina remained quiet and peaceful when the armies of the Caliph were busy supressing the rebels in other parts of Arabia during the wars of Apostasy. In short, Usama's expedition demonstrated to the tribes the resolve and strength of Medina to hold its own against all eneimes. However, it did not deter the neighbouring Bedouins from attacking Medina.

Bedouin Attack on Medina : June—August 632—The desert around Medina was full of hostile Bedouin tribes. Some of them were incited to attack the city by Tulayha, the false prophet of Najd. Several others were prompted by the predatory instincts of the nomads to plunder a rich and defenceless city. There were a few tribes which were incensed by the irksome demand for Zakat. They sent a deputation to the Caliph with the request that, though loyal to Islam, they might be exempted from the payment of Zakat. Even Umar interceded on their behalf fearing lest a refusal might increase the number of enemies of Islam, already mustering large. But the Caliph remained steadfast in regard to the injunctions of Islam. He would not relax a little of the legal tithe. "If you are requird to pay as much of Zakat as a string to tie a camel, I shall take it or fight for it." The deputation returned to its desert home, resolved to attack Medina which, as they had themselves noticed, was bereft of soldiers and lay defenceless. On his side, the Caliph collected as many men as could bear arms and posted them along the road to Najd. The threat to the city made all its people to rally around the Caliph. Thus Ali, Talha and Zubayr flocked around Abu Bakr and volunteered to defend the Capital of Islam. The Caliph posted them at the outer defences of Medina. He instructed all other men to assmble in the Mosque in order to march at a moment's notice in the direction of the Bedouin advance.

Battle of Dhu'l-Qassa : At last the Bedouins struck against Medina. Three Najdi tribes were in the forefront. They were

Banu Abs, Zubyan and Sulaym. Tulayha, the false propeht, sent his brother to instigate them on the war-path. They assembled near ar-Rabadha and Dhu'l-Qassa, the two stages on the road to Najd. Three days after the return of their deputaion from Medina, they launched their attack on the city. Abu Bakr was ready. He at once rushed with a contingent from the Mosque to Dhu'l-Qassa to reinforce the little detachment posted there. A stiff fighting began, which soon ended in the victory of the Muslims. The Bedouins were defeated. They fled to their desert fastness. Medina heaved a sigh of relief.

Results : The battle at Dhu'l-Qassah was short but momentous. "The affair was small," writes Sir William Muir, "but the effect was great. As failure would have been disastrous, perhaps fatal, to Islam, so was victory the turning-point in its favours." The victory ensured the future of Islam. It saved Medina, which soon after became the base of operations against the whole Arabian Peninsula, now virtually in revolt against Islam. It encouraged the Muslims to face the great dangers of Apostasy and raised their spirits for greater battles to come. It showed the unruly and rebellious Bedouins that the Caliph and Medina, even though bereft of soliders, were strong enough to defeat them. And the Bedouins respect nothing more than power. Still more, it convinced all of the faith of Abu Bakr that could move mountains.

Battle of Rabadha. A few days after the battle of Dhu'l Qassa, Usama's army returned to Medina from its operations. After giving the soldiers a rest for a few days, the Caliph led them against the Bedouin tribes still hanging around ar-Rabadha. He defeated them as well and thus removed the immediate danger to Medina completely. Having thus crushed the Bedouin danger to the capital, Abu Bkr turned his attention towards the apostatized Peninsula. This leads us to the Wars of Apostasy.

CHRPTER 15

THE WARS OF APOSTASY OR RIDDAH

September 632—June 633 A. D./11 A. H.

A still greater danger than the threat to Medina confronted Abu Bakr. It was the revolt of the tribes of Arabia—a revolt which was both political and religious. The death of the Holy Prophet was a signal for it. Soon after his death, reports reached Medina that one tribe after another in various parts of Arabia had renounced Islam, relapsed into the ways of Ignorance and revolted against the Caliph, the successor of the Prophet. Only a few places, like Mecca and Taif and still fewer tribes remained true to Islam and loyal to Medina, while the whole of Arabian Peninsula returned to the anarchy and evil ways of the Age of Ignorance. "The Arabs", writes a medieval historian graphically. "were on all sides rising in rebellion. Apostasy and disaffection raised their heads; Christians and Jews began to stretch out their necks; and the Faithful were as a flock of sheep without a shepherd, their Prophet gone, their numbers few, their foes a multitude." This was the movement of Riddah or Apostasy. It confronted Islam and its nascent Republic with a great peril.

Causes : What were the causes of this instantaneous and almost universal movement of revolt and apostasy? Its sudden and rapid spread has baffled historians, both medieval and modern, especially the modern European historians. Had not the whole of Arabia submitted to the Prophet and Islam two or three years before his demise? Why did the Peninsula then revolt soon after it?

Arabia not wholly united under Islam : It should be first noted that the Riddah or Apostasy was a product of the cumulative effect of several forces and tendencies, which possessed no inherent unity or organisation among themselves, but were often contrary and even contradictory.

Pious historians of Medieval times have painted a picture of whole Arabian Peninsula submitted to Islam. It is, however, an exaggerated account of the Age of the Holy Prophet. That the whole of the Peninsula had submitted to the political authority of the Prophet was a fact, but not to Islam. It was, indeed, the ultimate goal of the Holy Prophet to make all the Arabian tribes to follow no religion but Islam. But at the time of his death he had not fully succeeded in this mission, as is shown by his dying behest

that "no religion except Islam was to prevail in Arabia". In fact, it was always his policy not to call the tribes to Islam at once. He used to do it by stages, of which the first was the acceptance of political supremacy of Medina, the submission to the *Pax Islamica* or the socio-political security system of Islam, then the readiness to pay Zakat and finally to accept all the duties and injunctions of Islam as a faith. The first stage was often symbolised by a treaty between the Prophet and the tribe, as if both were allies or confederates, while the last stage was one of complete acceptance of Islam as a religion, and as a political community or Ummah. The last stage was one of full and unconditional submission to the Prophet and Islam.

Now the complete submission was achieved by the Prophet in Hijaz, the north-western region of the Peninsula, between Medina and Mecca and Taif. The tribes dwelling in other parts of Arabia, especially in the South and East, were still in various stages of integration and submission to the Prophet. Some of them were bound by treaties of political alliance. Had the Prophet lived longer, he would have won them over to complete submission to Islam as a religion. But his death arrested this process. And the tribes, regarding their allegiance as strictly personal, returned to the earlier condition of independence on the death of the Holy Prophet.

The Arabian tribes, however, failed to notice a fact—that in Islam politics follow religion and that Arabia could not be half Muslim and half pagan. The political geography of the Peninsula is such that it must either be wholly Muslim or wholly pagan. The men of Medina, and especially Abu Bakr, were resolved that the task commenced by the Prophet should be completed and that the whole of Arabia must be Muslim. It was out of such conditions that the movement and wars of Apostasy arose.

The Riddah was, indeed, the last flicker of the Jahiliya, that is, of the culture and spirit of the pre-Islamic Arabia. The causes of this relapse into Jahiliya were to be found in the Arabian nomadism, particularism, paganism and the new tendency towards prophetism. We analyse each of these causes in more detail.

Arabian Nomadism : the Bedouin : The Arabian nomad, the Bedouin, played the leading role in the movement of Apostasy. He is by nature a born rebel. He is unruly, wild and fickle in obedience and loyalty to any authority except that of his tribal chief. He sees nothing beyond his tribe. Within his tribe, he is often inclined towards the interests of his clan. The clan has the much closer and stricter unity of blood and kinship of families, tracing their descent from one grandfather or great-grandfather. The Bedouins are, therefore, parochial in outlook, anarchic and ungovernable in spirit,

separatist and rebellious in habits and fickle and disloyal in allegiance, political or religious. They love anarchy and license, partly because they are born in it, but mainly because they live by it. Law and order, firm administration and socal unity and integration which extend over several tribes or the whole country, are most irksome and distasteful to the Bedouins. They deprive them of their sources of livelihood and the zest for loot and raid which is the warf and woof of the Bedouin's nomadic life. The Bedouin had only one joy in life—plunder by raid and counterraid, his only productive activity, his economico-military profession, by which he lived and for which he was ready to die. All the wars and feuds of the Jahiliya were caused by such activities. But Islam and the Prophet forbade this way of life and disciplined him to live a peaceful, orderly and organized life in accordance with the laws and injunctions of the new Faith. Yet its moral restraints and injunctions were most irksome and distasteful to the Bedouins. So, on the death of the Prophet, they made a strong bid to get rid of them and return to their lawless ways of the Ignorance.

The recency of their conversion to Islam also tended towards the relapse of the Bedouins into apostasy. In fact, Islam had not yet taken a firm hold on the Bedouins. Most of them had been recently converted, or only submitted to the Islamic State. Islam had not sunk deep into their hearts. The result was that when the Prophet died and Medina became distant and weak in the eyes of these children of the desert, they relapsed into their tribal customs and creeds and renounced the Islamic faith and authority.

Tribal Particularism: Tribalism was the cardinal feature of the Arabian life and society. The tribe or the clan was the basic social unit beyond which the Arabs saw nothing and liked nothing. The rise of the Prophet and the spread of Islam tended to a greater and higher social unity and uniformity of the Islamic society and community, the Islamic Ummah. The Arab tribes were however too unruly and too parochial to understand it properly. They were still loyal to their tribal chiefs, their tribal interests and customs. They submitted to Islam, partly because of the military successes of the Prophet over his Qurayshite and other rivals and partly because of the political advantages of the Pax Islamica. Several tribes submitted not to Islam but to the Prophet as the political overlord and authority in Arabia. They viewed their submission as a personal bond between them and the Prophet which was terminated with his death. So the death of the Prophet was a signal for the tribes of the Peninsula to return to the loyalty and allegiance towards their tribal chief and tribal interests, customs and creeds, which they prized far more than their loyalty to distant Medina and its centralised government and the multi-tribal nation of Islam. But it meant that the Peninsula was to lapse again into a congeries of tribes and clans, each recog-

nising its own limited interests above those of all others and fighting and raiding each other endlessly. These were the separatist and centrifugal tendencies of Arabian tribalism. The movement of Apostasy was a return to these earlier fissiparous and parochial tendencies.

Paganism Vs. Islam : Islam taught a strict morality which the riotous and licentious Bedouins felt too irksome and hard for them. Fasting, alms-giving and praying were too much for them. The Arabs were recently converted to Islam and had not yet grown out of their ancestral forms of worship and idolatry. The Prophet (peace be upon him) and his little band of early converts were too few to train and educate the seething masses of the unruly Bedouins in the ways of Allah. Many of them still worshipped their idols secretly, whom they had not broken but hidden away. Islam taught meakness, forgiveness, for the injuries inflicted, piety and devoutness. These teachings of Islam were too harsh for the Arabs of the desert who loved the licence and indulgence of the paganism of old, which placed no restrictions upon drinking and other pleasures of palate or sex. Lastly, the payment of Zakat was the most distasteful of all Islamic injunctions. As we said above, several Najdi tribes sent deputations to Medina with the request to the Caliph to exempt them from its payment while they would continue to be loyal to Islam. On his refusal these tribes threw off their allegiance, renounced Islam and revolted like other apostatized tribes. In short, the Apostasy movement was the return of the old paganism of the Age of Ignorance as against the new faith of Islam.

Prophetism: In spite of this return to the paganism of old, it could not be a complete return. History never repeats itself. Apostasy was not simply a revival of the paganism of the Jahiliya. There was a new element of prophetism in it, as illustrated by the emergence and influence of false prophets. The example and success of the Holy Prophet had instigated several pretenders to claim prophethood. They were encouraged to such pretensions by the parochialism and pride of the Arab tribes. Like everything else, the Arab tribes also sought to have their own prophets, as against the "Prophet of the Quraysh" as they regarded the Holy Prophet. This was the new tendency of prophetism, examplified by the four false prophets, namely Musaylima the Liar, Aswad al-Ansi of Yemen, Tulayha bin Khuwaylid of Najd and a prophetess Sajah of Mesopotamia.

1. **Musaylima the Liar.** He came of the powerful tribe of Banu Hanifa which dwelt in and around Yemama in Central Arabia. He visited the Holy Prophet in Medina, when he came with his tribal deputation, perhaps as an attendant rather than as a member. On the return to his native place. Musaylima laid claim to prophethood,

pretended to work miracles and even composed some clumsy verses which he declared to be revelations from the Most High. Some of his verses, recorded by tradition are indeed most ludicrous in style and sense. For example, it was revealed to him that: The elephant, what is the elephant, and who shall tell you what is the elephant? He has a poor tail, and a long trunk; and is a trifling part of the creations of thy God." He composed a similar verse about the frog and the cloud.

Anyhow, Musaylima imitated the practices and ways of the Muslims so much that he earned the nickname of "the little Muslim" as the word "Musaylima" really means. It is said that he instituted prayers and fasting and had a Quran of his own, a revelation of which is quoted above. He forbade his followers to have intercourse with pregnant wives, and was inclined to favour monogamy. Modern European research regards him as a prophet of the agrarian communities of Central Arabia. Professor Margoliouth believes that he was influenced by Christianity rather than by Islam. Nevertheless, his real strength did not lie in his prophetic pretensions but in his military prowess. He made himself the master of the poweful tribe of Banu Hanifa. It provided him with 40,000 men, fully armed and warlike in spirit. His military prowess made him the greatest peril to Islam and Medina.

2. **Aswad al-Ansi** was the false prophet of Yemen. He revolted in the last days of the Holy Prophet. He captured Sana'. But he was killed by Dailmi and his party who stole into his palace. They entered into his bed-chamber and cut his throat, while he roared like a bull. His wife, who hated him for forcible marriage kept off his guard from going in to his rescue by saying, "Do not enter, your Prophet is receiving a revelation from the Most High." His death occurred only a day before the death of of the Prophet, which incited his followers to revolt and apostasy afterwards.

3. **Tulayha** of Najd was the chief of Banu Asad, which dwelt in Najd to the east of Medina. He was a wealthy chief and a great warrior. One day, while lost in the waterless desert with his tribe, he divined a water-spring, which was in his eyes a sufficient spiritual achievement to claim prophethood. He too revolted against Medina soon after Prophet's death. He incited the Najdi tribes, Bonu Asad, Tayy, Ghatafan and others to attack Medina. Though not so powerful as Musaylima, Tulayha, however, presented a greater danger due to the proximity of his desert-abode to Medina.

4. **Sajjah**. The fourth pretender to prophethood was a woman named Sajah. She belonged to the Christian tribe of Taghlib, a sub-clan of Banu Yerbu, which was a branch of the great tribe of Tamim. Banu Taghlib dwelt in Mesopotamia, on the banks of the Euphrates.

Sajah was, therefore, a Christian and a subject of the Persian Empire. Her appearance in Arabia might have been due to Persian instigation.

Abu Bakr's policy towards the Apostates : The Apostasy movement spread throughout the Peninsula with the rapadity of a wild fire. Tribes after tribes renounced Islam and asserted independence of Medina. The teachers and administrators, appointed by the Prophet, were driven out of the tribes and provinces. The four imposters laid claim to prophethood and misled their tribes. In short. all that the Holy Prophet had established after twenty years of hardships, persecutions and struggles, was threatened to be swept away by the rising wave of tribal anarchy and pride, and Arabia was to relapse into Ignorance again from which the Prophet had endeavoured to rescue it. It was indeed time for decisive action, if Islam was to be saved. Abu Bakr was faced with this great and arduous task. "False prophets had to be crushed; rebels vanquished; apostates reclaimed or else exterminated; and the supremacy vindicated of Islam. In short, it was the mission of Abu Bakr to redeem the dying Prophet's words 'Islam was to be the faith of all Arabia.

Military Expeditions against Rebels. With this great mission before him, Abu Bakr summoned the refitted army of Usama and all other Muslims to assemble at Dhu'l Qassa for a holy war against the apostates and rebels. He divided them into eleven battalions and placed each of them under a distinguished commander to whom he presented a banner. Arabia was divided into eleven parts; and a battalion was sent against each to suppress heresy and rebellion in it. These arrangements were as follows:

The first column, under Khalid bin Walid was sent against Tulaha and Malik bin Nuwayra in the Najd desert.

The second and third columns under Ikrima binAbu Jahl and Shurahbil bin Hasna, were sent against Musaylima in Central Arabia.

The fourth column under Muhajir bin Abi Umayya was to march against Yemen and Hadramawt.

The fifth column, under Hudhayfa, was to subdue Uman and Mahra in extreme south-east.

The sixth column, under Al-Ala', was to suppress apostasy in Bahrayn.

The seventh column was to march against Banu Sulaym and Hawazin.

The eighth column was sent to Tayma.

The nineth column under Amr ibn al-As was despatched against Banu Quza'a

The tenth column under Khalid bin Said was sent to keep watch on the Syrian border.

The eleventh column was kept in reserve at Medina. Abu Bakr, as the supreme commander, directed the movements of these columns from the metropolis and issued instructions to them from time to time.

Call to the rebels : Before actual hostilities started, the Caliph afforded a last chance to the rebels and apostates to repent and submit to Islam. He issued a proclamation to them to lay down arms, repent over their misdeeds and submit to Islam, on which condition they would be pardoned and received back into its fold. But if they refused, no mercy was to be shown to them. Their fighting men were to be killed, women and children caught and sold into slavery and properties confiscated. The commanders were instructed to summon them to submission before opening hostilities. The sign of submission was the call of Azan. If it was heard from them, the tribe was to be regarded Muslim and not attacked : otherwise it was to be punished to the bitter end.

War against Tulayha : Khalid bin Walid was chosen to lead the column against Tulayha, the false prophet of Najd. He was most dangerous for he was nearest to Medina. He had revolted in his tribe, Banu Asad and had assembled them at Buzakha, a water-spring in the desert of Najd, where the namadic tribes used to come. On the death of the Prophet, Tulayha persuaded Uaynah, the Chief of Banu Ghatafan, another Najdi tribe, to join his rebellion. Banu Asad and Ghatafan were allies in pre-Islamic times. Uaynah joined the false prophet with 700 of his men on the pretext, as he said, "a prophet of our own is better than a Prophet of Quraysh. Moreover, Muhammad (Sm) is dead, but Tulayha is alive." Soon after another nomadic tribe, Banu Tayy, of the famous Hatim at-Tayi, also joined the revolt of Tulayha. Other rebels, whom Abu Bakr had defeated at Dhu'l Qassa and Rabadha, also fled to Tulayha and gathered under his standard. Indeed, Buzakha became the rallying point of all the rebels and apostates to the east of Medina.

Khalid bin Walid marched against Tulayha at Buzakha. He sent Adi, a grandson of Hatim, to his tribe. He was the Chief of Banu Tayi and had remained loyal to Islam, Adi persuaded his tribe to submit to the Caliph. They did so and joined the army of Khalid bin Walid with one thousand men under their Chief. Thus reinforced, Khalid advanced on Buzakha.

Battle of Buzakha : Khalid's army now numbered about three thousand, including both Ansars, Muhajireen and the nomads. On the way, the Muslims found the trampled bodies of Ukkasha and his companion whom Khalid had sent in advance to keep a watch on Tulayha's movements. Their murder infuriated the Muslims very much. A hot and long battle ensued with the enemy. Soon the Muslims got the upper hand. When faced with a critical situation, Uaynah, the Chief of Ghatafan, anxiously enquired from his prophet : "Have you received any message from the Most High ?"

"Not yet," replied Tulayha, who was standing apart from the battlefield, clad in his prophetic garb of hair. After a few minutes the anxious Chief again enquired about the message of victory and was given the same reply. "Have you got a message yet ?" asked Uaynah, the third time. "Yes," replied the prophet, not to disappoint his loyal follower any longer, "a message has come." "And what saith the Lord ?" enquired the Bedouin Chief eagerly. "Thus saith the Lord unto me," began Tulayha prophetically, "Thy hopes and of Khalid shall remain at variance, and an affair shall happen that thou wilt not forget."

"To hell with thee and your damned inspiration", cried Uaynah scornfully. "Of course, the Lord knows that an affair shall soon happen that thou shall never forget." Then he called upon his men, "Ho, every man to his tent"—the Bedouin cry of flight. And he fled with his men from the battlefield. The false prophet also found the field of battle too hot for him to stay. Placing his wife on the horse-back, he fled to Syria. But later he submitted to the second Caliph, Umar, and became a Muslim. We shall hear of him fighting in the Wars of Islam in Persia. His tribe, Banu Asad, also submitted and were pardoned for their apostasy by Abu Bakr. Uaynah, the Ghatafan Chief was arrested and brought to Medina, where he too was pardoned by the Caliph.

War against Malik bin Nawayra, Winter 632 A.D. After defeating Tulayha, Khalid bin Walid continued to advance eastwards against the insurgents of the powerful Banu Tamim. This tribe was divided in its loyalties, part of them remained Muslim and part pagan and Christian. Among the later was Malik bin Nuwaira, the Chief of Banu Yerbu, a clan of Tamim. He too would have submitted to Islam, but for the meteoric descent of Sajah, the false prophetess, upon Arabia. She belonged to the Temimite clan of Taghlib in Mesopotamia. She entered Arabia at the head of a large host of pagans and Christians and summoned Banu Yerbu and other Tamimite clans to join in her avowed mission to attack Medina and crush Islam. This was at the time when Khalid was fighting Tulayha. Malik bin Nuwayra, the Chief of Banu Yerbu, responded

to her call. But other Tamimite clans held aloof. Thereupon Sajah advanced against them. Thus an internecine war broke out among the great Tamim clans. Khalid bin Walid remained a passive spectator, hoping to see Sajah exhaused by her warfare. At last, finding Banu Tamim adamant to her prophetic claims, she left them and advanced against her fellow-pretender, Musaylima. However, Malik bin Nuwayra was left alone to bear the brunt of Khalid's attack. He was, indeed, on the horns of a dilemma. Most of his men had turned to Islam, while his prophetess had gone towards Yemama. It was in such a state of mind when he along with about 25 of his men incidentally fell into hands of Khalid's men. The Muslims were themselves divided on the question whether Malik bin Nuwayra and his band had submitted to Islam or not. Some asserted that they had, for the call of Azan was heard from their tents, while others declared that they were still disloyal insurgents who must be killed for their apostasy and rebellion. As night fell, Khalid bin Walid put off this qustion to be decided the next day and ordered that Malik and his men to be put in a tent nearby.

During the night happened an event which increased all the more the dispute among the Muslims. Some Muslim soldiers put Malik and his soldiers to the sword, and Khalid bin Walid married the beautiful widow of Malik. Next day Abu Qutada, the leader of the Ansars in Khalid's army charged his commander of deliberately causing the murder of a Muslim. According to him, Malik bin Nuwaira had adopted Islam. Mutemim bin Nuwayra, a brother of Malik, also supported the charge of Abu Qutada. Both of them repaired to Medina to arraign Khalid for the murder of a Muslim.

The Caliph summoned him to answer the charges. Khalid told that the death of Malik bin Nuwaira was due to misunderstanding of his orders by his soldiers. As the night was bitterly cold, he had asked his soldiers to cover the prisoners with blanket. Now in their dialect, "to cover a man with a blanket" implied to put him to death. So they acted accordingly and started killing the prisoners. Their hue and cry attracted Khalid to their tent, but they were all killed before his arrival. The Caliph accepted Khalid's explanation and exonerated him of the charges. The trial of Khalid bin Walid, however, proves the fact of the equality before law or the rule of law which prevailed under the Orthodox Caliphate. Even such a great commander as Khalid could be arraigned by a humble citizen and even by a former rebel as Mutemim bin Nuwayra was, and he had to answer the charges as an ordinary person without any privileges of position, birth or services. Hazrat Umar, however, did not accept Khalid's explanation. He considered him guilty of violating Arab custom prohibiting marriage with the wife of a

fallen foe on the field of battle.

War against Musaylima : Like other pretenders, Musaylima also asserted his claim to prophethood in the last days of the Holy Prophet. Few responded to him then. But after the death of the Holy Prophet, his claim was accepted by his rival pretender, Tulayha. But he had yet to face a new enemy.

Enters Sajjah : The new enemy was no other than Sajah, the prophetess of Mesopotamia. She had been disappointed with her own tribe, Temim and turned her arms against her rival prophet, Musaylima. She advanced on Yemama and despached a threatening letter to Musaylima. He decided to inveigle her by guile rather than to fight her with arms. He invited her to his garden outside Yemama, where he offered to marry her. She accepted to become his wife on the condition of 'mehr' of half the land-revenue of Yemama. She stayed with Musaylima for three days and after collecting her share of the land revenue, departed to the north. But her marriage discredited her in the eyes of her army which melted away. She then returned to Mesopotamia and was heard no more. Thus she came like a wind and returned like a whirldwind, leaving the tangled politics of Arabia unaffected by her meteoric sweep accross the land. At this stage, the Caliph sent his armies against Musaylima.

Abu Bakr despatched Ikrima and Shurahbil against Musaylima. He had instructed them to deliver a conserted attack. But Ikrama made a hurried and single-handed attack and was defeated. The Caliph wrote him angrily for his precipitancy and ordered him to advance against the rebels in Uman. In the meanwhile, he commissioned Khalid, now exonerated of all charges in his trial at Medina, to advance against the imposter.

Battle of Yemama : April, 633 A. D. Khalid then advanced against Musaylima. By a surprise attack, he captured Muja'a, a lieutenant of the false prophet. Next day, Musaylima arrayed his forces in a plain, called Aqraba, outside the town of Yemama. Khalid also marshalled his army into three divisions. The enemy fought with desperate bravery, and threw the Muslims into confusion. One time the enemy even pressed them back to their camp. It was a critical moment for Islam. Defeat would have been disastrous for its cause. At this critical juncture, Khalid adopted tribal formation for his army, so that the warriors might be encouraged to fight hard by their own kith and kin. This arrangement proved to be highly effective. The Arabs fought well, when surrounded by their own kinsmen. So the Muslim army drove the enemy back and at last defeated them. They broke and fled. At this moment one of the warriors of Banu Hanifa cried : "To the

garden." The discomfitted enemy fled into a walled garden nearby with Musaylima at their head and shut themselves in.

Battle of the Garden of Death : The garden, however, soon proved to be not a place of refuge but a garden of death. The Muslim troops followed close on the heels of the fleeing enemy, but found their way barred by the wall. However, al-Bara bin Malik jumped on the wall, and then jumped into the enemy and opened the gate. At this the whole Muslim force poured into the narrow enclosure of the garden and a fierce hand to hand fighting began. The infidels were overpowered. The garden was turned into a shamble, for which it earned the name of the "Garden of death" by the Arab historians. Musaylima, along with several thousand of his followers, lay dead. Thus ended the battle of Yemama, the severest of the battles against the apostates.

Results : Banu Hanifa and the Muslims suffered heavy losses. However, while the Muslim losses were about 2,000 dead, the losses of Banu Hanifa were colossal. They lost 10,000 men. After their defeat, a deputation of Banu Hanifa was sent by Khalid to Medina to seek pardon of the Caliph. As in all other cases, the Caliph pardoned them and received them into the fold of Islam. Khalid bin Walid was left at Yemama for a few months, till the Caliph required his services in Chaldaea against the Persians.

The war against Musaylima was, however, a turning-point in the struggles against the rebels. Apostasy was suppressed in northern and Central Arabia and the way to South and East now opened.

Collection of the Quran : One of the results of the war against Musaylima was the compilation of the leaves of the Quran. The Holy Book was not compiled in the form of a collected book, but was memorised by many persons, who were known as the Readers or Haffaz and Qarra. Among the Muslim losses in this battle there were about 300 'readers' also. Their loss made Hazrat Umar to fear that if more 'readers' died in subsequent battles, the sacred text would be lost. He advised the Caliph to collect the leaves of the Quran and place them in safe custody. The Caliph acted accordingly. It was the first step towards the compilation of the Quran.

Suppression of Heresy in Other Parts of Arabia : **Bahrayn** : The victory of the Muslims over Musaylima made their task of suppressing apostasy in other regions of the Peninsula easier. Beyond Yemama and skirting the Persian Gulf lay the provinces of Bahrayn and Hejer. Al-Mundhir, the Prince of Bahrayn had adopted Islam in the days of the Prophet, who sent al-Ala as his deputy. But

after his death, the people again lapsed into heresy, for their Prince also died soon after the Prophet's death. Al-Ala fled to Medina for aid. The Caliph despatched a battalion under the command of Al-Ala himself. The brilliant victories of Khalid paved the way for al-Ala's advance against the rebels in Bahrayn. He inflicted a defeat on them near the coast of the Persian Gulf. They took refuge in an island, but were chased and defeated there. Al-Ala then advanced against Bani Bakr, dwelling near the Persian borders. They sought the aid of the Persians. But Al-Ala defeated the combined forces of Bani Bakr and the Persians, and drove them into the sea. It was the first battle when the Arab rebels were supported by the non-Arab people, the Persians. It was soon to become the opening battle in the great war between Islam and ancient Iran.

Uman : The reclamation of the neighbouring province of Uman followed close upon that of Bahrayn. After his discomfiture at the hands of Musaylima, Ikrima bin Abu Jahl was ordered by the Caliph to advance against the rebels in Uman. Its Prince had submitted to the Prophet, who sent Amr ibn al-As as his resident in Uman. After his death Uman also lapsed into heresy and Amr returned to Medina. But the Prince remained loyal to Islam. The Caliph sent Hudhayfa against Uman and later despatched Ikrima in support of him. On reaching Uman, they got the help of the loyal Prince and inflicted a defeat upon the rebels in a battle near Daba, a market-place for South Asian goods. A large booty, including South Asian merchandise, fell into Muslim hands.

Leaving Hudhayfa in charge of Uman, Ikrima turned to the south-west and captured Mahra, another province in the South. Ikrima then continued his victorious march against Hadramawt.

Yemen : The fertile Province of the Yemen was also in turmoil. Though the imposter, Aswad al-Ansi, was dead, his followers were yet unsuppressed. The Caliph had appointed Muhajir bin Abi Ummayya to lead an army against these rebels. His departure from Medina was, however, delayed by his illness. At last he left for the South, joined by many loyal tribes on the way. Muhajir's task was facilited by the mutual quarrels among the rebel leaders, Qays bin Makshuh and Amr bin Ma'dikerib. Amr defeated and captured Qays. Nevertheless he decided to make peace with Islam. He brought Qays to Muhajir, who seized both and despatched them to Medina, where the Caliph pardoned them. Both embraced Islam once again. Later Amr fought bravely in Persian wars. After this, Yemen was rapidly pacified by Muhajir, who then turned towards Hadramawt.

Hadramawt : It was the last Province to submit to Islam. It was ruled by the Princes of the tribe of Kindah. Al-Ashath bin

Qays, the Prince of Kindah, had adopted Islam in the Prophet's lifetime. But he too renounced it after his death, for he quarrelled with Ziyad, who had remained loyal to the Faith. Having subdued the provinces to the east and west of Hadramawt, Ikrima marched on it from the east and Muhajir from the west. They were supported by Ziyad. Al-Ashath was defeated and forced to flee into a fortress where he shut himself in for several days. At last despairing of all hopes of escape, Al-Ashath offered to surrender the fortress if nine lives were spared. The condition was accepted. When the list was prepared, al-Ashath forgot to include his name. He was captured and sent to Medina. At first the Caliph intended to put him to death for his revolt and heresy. But at last, moved by his protests to fight for the Faith, the Caliph pardoned him too. He embraced Islam and later joined the armies invading Iraq and Persia. With the victory in Hadramawt the wars of Apostasy came to an end.

Consequences of the Wars of Riddah : Review and Assessment : Thus, within one year of the Prophet's death, apostasy was suppressed all over the Peninsula, and the Faith was re-established in Arabia. It was, indeed, one of the greatest achievements of Abu Bakr, with far-reaching consequences for Islam, Arabia and the future history of the world.

For Islam: The wars of Apostasy ended in the victory of Islam which had then almost vanished from Arabia. Defeat would have been disastrous and even ruinous for it. The last behest of the Prophet that Islam alone was to be the religion of Arabia, was fulfilled. Islam was, indeed, saved by Abu Bakr's faith, courage, loyalty and perseverence. "But for him", remarks Muir aptly, "Islam would have melted away in compromise with the Bedawi tribes, or likelier still, have perished in the throes of birth." A medeival Arab historian has rightly observed, "On the death of Muhammad (Sm), it wanted but little and the Faithful would have perished utterly. But the Lord strengthened the heart of Abu Bakr, and established us thereby in the resolve to give place not for one moment to the Apostates, giving answer to them but in these three words, Submission, Exile or the Sword."

For Arabia: The suppression of the Apostasy saved Arabia from the recrudescence of the tribal anarchy and ignorance of the Jahiliya. The victory of Islam was, indeed, the triumph of the new Arab State over the anarchic Arab tribalism of old. Arab tribes were again welded into a single nation with one religion and with one centralised State, headed by the Caliph at Medina. This was the social, religious, and political unity of the Peninsula, which was threatened by the apostate tribes and rebels. The fight against the Riddah was not merely a fight against the apostates. It was a

flght for the political supremacy of the young Republic of Medina over Arabia As a faithful follower of the Prophet, Abu Bakr clearly visualised what was at stake. His mission was to save Islam and the young Republic of Islam, built by his great Master. He achieved his mission by establishing a greater and firmer unification of the Arab tribes under a centralised State of Islam. As Von Kremer writes, "Islam was everywhere triumphant. To Medina the caravans wended their way ...Great enough were the direct successes of Islam but greater still were the indirect ones. Apart from the extraordinary progress of the new religion, which convinced the rude sons of the desert more than anything else of its truth, the religious wars at home led to a complete transformation of the social conditions throughout the peninsula."

For World History: Viewed in the context of the future history of the Arabs and the world, the Wars of Riddah were not really a local affair of the Arabian Peninsula. Their natural result was not only the restoration of Medinese authority, as a modern writer puts it, but also the extension of the dominions of Islam.

The victory of Islam in Arabia gave a powerful impetus to its spread in the neighbouring countries around the Peninsula. This tendency was noticeable in Islam from the very outest. It is a religion which had both a national appeal to the Arabs and a universal appeal to the whole mankind. The Holy Prophet had sent missionaries to the people and princes of the neighbouring countries. He died before he could take the next step towards this end. But the Muslims were advancing towards the Syrian borders in the last days of the Prophet. His death and the consequent revolt of the Arab tribes arrested this tendency for the time being. As soon as Abu Bakr pacified and unified the whole Arabia, he sent armies against Syria and Persia which subdued these lands to Islam. Though he did not live to accomplish this great task, here again he followed in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet and in the universal spirit of Islam. Thus the Wars of Apostasy became the starting point of the great conquests and expansion of early Islam, as the logical result of its victory over the Apostasy.

1. *Cambridge Medieval His ory*, Vol. II p. 335.

CHAPTER 16

CONQUESTS OF EARLY ISLAM : THEIR CAUSES

The Miracle of Early Islam : Abu Bakr had united the whole of Arabia under Islam and the sovereignty of Medina. But the unification of an age-old divided land set into motion a chain reaction which involved the new Arabian Republic in a long and obstinate struggle with its great neighbours, Persia and Rome, the imperialist colossi of the ancient world.

Thanks to her hot deserts and barren rocks, Arabia was a closed book to the conquerors and empire-builders of Persia and Rome. But the Arabs as a people were no strangers to them. Indeed, the outlying provinces of Arabia were at one time or another under the control or suzeranity of Persia or Rome. Moreover, Arabs as merchants and mercenaries, raiders or robbers, sailors or soldiers, had been known to the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans for hundreds of years before the rise of Islam. In fact they were looked down upon by their powerful and civilised nighbours as filthy caravaneers and lizard-eaters. Nevertheless, the speed and size of military conquests on which the Arabs under Abu Bakr and Umar launched themselves, not only transformed the political map of the three continents for a long time to come, but also surprised their own contemporaries as much as they have puzzled the historianas and scholars since then. Writes Professor P. H. Hitti : "If someone in that first third of the Seventh Christian Century have had the audacity to prophesy that, within a decade some unheralded, unforseen power from the hitherto barbarous and little-known land of Arabia was to make its apperance, hurl itself against the only two world-powers of the age, fall heir to one—the Sassanid—and strip the other—the Byzantine—of its fairest provinces, he would undoubtedly have been declared a lunatic."[1] And yet this ubelievable miracle did happen during a short span of two decades, from the last year of Abu Bakr's reign to the sixth year of Uthman's reign, 633—653 A. D. What were the reasons of the victory of the starving ill-equipped and poorly-armed Bedouins of the Desert over the mighty rulers and their well-equipped armies of the prosperous Sown ?

The causes may be briefly enumerated thus :—

1. Religious fanaticism of the early Muslims and their urge

1. *A History of Arabs*, p. 142.

towards proselytism.

2. Inner necessity to keep the sullen tribes of Arabia in check after the Wars of Riddah.

3. Lure of loot and Lust for rapine of the Bedouin.

4. Abu Bakr's policy to consolidate and protect the frontiers of the new Republic of Arabia.

5. The Caliph's policy of liberation of the subject Arab tribes of Persia and Rome.

6. Aggressive Imperialism of Arabia's great neighbours of Persia and Byzantine against the young Republic of Medina and its policy of self-defence.

7. The periodic cataclysms of the tribal migration of the Arabian Peninsula.

8. Economic Causes : Barren Arabia *vs.* the fertile Crescent; Tribal economy *vs.* Slave and feudal economy of Persia and Rome ; Population Pressure of barren Arabia ; the eternal struggle of the Desert *vs.* the Sown or the Nomad *vs.* the settled populatiou : etc.

Let us analyse each of these causes and explanations and evaluate their historical validity.

1. **Religious fanaticism and proselytism by force** : Many European authors, more so in the past than in the present times, have frequently averred that the early Muslim conquerors were religious fanatics, bent upon propagating Islam at the point of their swords and forcibly converting the non-Muslims to their Faith. Fanaticism and proselytism by force of arms were, according to these European writers, the causes and motives of the great and swift conquests of early Islam. The Christian writers often depict the early Muslim conquerors as offering the non-Muslims the alternatives of conversion, taxation or extermination at their hands. Thus they describe the Caliphs and commanders as fervid fanatics who undertook the campaigns against the Persians and the Byzantines for proselytism by force. They depict early Islam as a Church Militants. "A corresponding and equally discredited hypothesis held by the Christians portrays the Arabian Muslims as going about offering the Quran in one hand and the sword in the other."[1] However, the charge of militant fanaticism and proselytism is groundless and biased, supported neither by the facts of history, nor by the teachings of Islam.

1. Phillip K. Hitti, *A History of Arabs.*

The Holy Prophet and the Quran teach the Muslims to propagate the Faith by peaceful means and forbid forcible conversions. The peaceful propagation of Islam is illustrated by the life and activities of the Prophet and early converts in Mecca, their migration to Medina, the letters and emissaries which the Prophet sent to the peoples and princes of Arabia and of the neighbouring lands. Moreover, this charge is refuted by the injunctions of the Quran, which has in its several verses forbidden to convert people by force. For instance, Sura 2, verse 256 declares : "*La ikrah fi'l-din*"—There is no complusion in religion"; or, Sura 18, verse 29 : *The Truth is from your Lord; so let him who pleases believe, and let him who pleases disbelieve*"; or,Sura 6, verse 105 : "*Indeed there have come to you clear proofs from your Lord : whoever will, therefore, see, it is for the good of his own soul, and whoever will disbelieve, it shall be against himself.*" These verses clearly indicate that, instead of preaching compulsion and violence in matters of belief or unbelief, Islam upheld principles of religious freedom and tolerance which are quite modernistic in spirit and attitude.

In recent times some Western authors have also come round to the view of the peaceful and tolerant nature of Islam and rejected the theory of Islamic propagation by force and violence. Rev. de Lacy O' Leary refutes this charge of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world enforcing Islam at the point of the sword upon conquered race as one of the most absurd myths that historians have ever repeated. There are plenty of such fanaticism and forced conversions, but these do not belong to the early history of Islam, nor to that of the Arabs; these stories come from the banks of the Nigar, from Sudan and from Sumatra and are connected with Muslim religious revivals of a later date and dubious orthodoxy."

The fact is that what the early Muslims were eager to spread was not Islam but Pax Islamica, the "*Dar-al-Islam*", as it came to be called by the science of Fiqh later. "It was", writes Professor Becker succinctly, "not the religion of Islam which was by that time disseminated by the sword, but merely the political sovereignty of the Arabs. The acceptance of Islam by others than Arabians was not only not striven for, but was in fact regarded with disfavour."[1]

In spite of the Islamic teachings of equality and brotherhood of mankind, the majority of the early Muslim Arabs were steeped in sentiments of tribal pride and arrogance. They regarded Islam as more or less exclusively a religion for the

1. *Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. II, p. 330.

Arabs. So to charge them with the desire for forcible conversion of non-Arabs is to disregard the spirit which agitated them. They were too nationalistic in outlook to force anyone to accept Islam at the point of their swords. Though they did not object if some one adopted Islam of his own accord, they did not intend or attempt at forcible proselytism of the non-Arabs. The question arises: why were the early Muslim Arabs so keen to extend *Pax Islamica* to foreign lands and peoples ? This leads us to other causes.

2. **Inner necessity to keep the discontented tribes in check : the Results of the Riddah Wars.** Mordern scholars trace the impulse to foreign conquests to the results of Riddah Wars. According to them, the Caliphs and the leaders of Medina were confronted with an inner necessity to keep the Arab tribes, whom they had forcibly subjected to the authority of Medina, in check by diverting their attention and energy to foreign conquests.

Sir William Muir is an ardent, though biased, advocate of this view. He writes, "The rebellion was suppressed, but the Arab tribes remained sullen and averse. The Bedawi, wont to wander wild and free over his pathless deserts, chafed at the demand of tithe, and spurned obedience to Medina. Simply force and fear as yet attached him to the Caliph. The question occurs, what should have been the fortune of Islam had no great impluse arisen from without ? The prospect was not encouraging. Convictions so shallow, and aspiration so low, as those of the Bedawi would soon have disappeared ; force and fear would not long have availed to hold together such disintegrated materials as go to form the Arab nation. The South was jealous of the North ; Bedawin of the desert scorned the settled population ; each tribe had cause of rivalry with its neighbours, and feuds were ever arising out of the law of blood. If nothing external had supervened, he (the Bedawi) would soon have shaken off the yoke of Islam, and Arabia would have returned to its primeval state. But fortunately for Islam, a new idea electrified the nation. It was the scent of war that now turned the sullen temper of the Arab tribes into eager loyalty : for thus the brigand spirit of the Bedawi was brought into union with the new-born fire of Islam, The call to battle (in foreign lands) reverberated through the land, and was answered eagerly."[1]

Professor C. H. Becker writes in the same strain but more rationally, thus : "It has but recently been recognised that an intelligible history of the expansion of the Arabs is only possible by making these wars against the Ridda the starting-point from which the great invasions developed themselves, more from inner

1. *The Chaliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall*, pp. 41-3.

necessity than through any wise direction from Medina—undertakings, moreover, from the enormous extent of which even the optimism of Mahomet would have flinched. The necessity of keeping their own victorious troops employed, as also of reconciling the subjected ones to the new conditions, irresistibly compelled an extension of the Islamic rule beyond the borders of Arabia."[1]

A more scientific and better explanation of the inner necessity in the expansionism of early Islam is given by Professor H. A. R. Gibb, thus : "Since, however, inescapable economic forces made any permanent stabilisation of inner Arabian conditions virtually impossible, the mere suppression of bedouin opposition—with the implication that the forces of Islam would be used up in an tnterminable and sterile struggle with the tribesmen—was an inadequate solution for the problem set by them. It was necessary to find the terms on which the tribesmen as a whole could be swung, if not up to the first level of assimilation (of Islam), at least on to the level of identifying Islam with their own interest. Hence the trial expeditions deliberately organized by Abu Bakr after Muhammad's death, when groups of tribesmen were despatched under Meccan commanders towards the frontiers of Syria," which led to the wars of foreign conquests.

There is an element of truth in these views, provided they are shorn of the bias and propaganda in which they are so deeply embedded, such as the sullenness of the tribes, their aversion to Islam, as Muir puts them. A Muslim author, Maulana Muhammad Ali, has rightly refuted Muir's charges by referring to the fact, admitted by Muir himself, that "when these expeditions were first launched, Abu Bakar forbade the enlistment of all who had taken part in the rebellion. This ban continued throughout his rule. Yet in the same breath it is contended that the Persian and Syrian campaigns were intended to lure away these rebel tribes from home politics. How could this be so when the door of military service was shut against them ? This clearly shows that the accusation is absolutely baseless."

No doubt, a narrow psychological explanation of historical events is too superficial and unscientific to accept. Human moods and emotions of sullenness or aversion are too transient and individualistic to effect durable and lasting changes in human life and conduct, especially on a national and historical scale, though such explanations are very effective progaganda for the appeal to personal prejudices. We have, however, to probe deep for the causes which impelled and inspired the early Muslim conquerors to

1. *Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. II, pp. 334-7.

3. *Early Caliphate*, p. 51.

deeds and achievements of world historic importance. They are found in the theory of inner necessity, if it is explained in the context of (i) the socio-economic conditions of early Arabia, (ii) the need for political control of the unruly Bedouins, (iii) the geographical factors of the Peninsula at the time of the Wars of Riddah, etc. Thus the analysis of the inner necessity of the early Islamic conquests leads us to other causes.

3. **Lure of Loot and the Lust for Expansion**: Another handy but superficial view of the expansionism of early Islam is that it was due to the lure of the loot and the lust for rapine which moved the early conquerors of Arabia to invade and subjugate their rich and prosperous neighbours. This view is also expounded by Sir William Muir and other European authors. While propounding his thesis of the Arab tribes after the Wars of Riddah, Sir William Muir continues to say "No sooner was apostasy put down than, first in Chaldaea and than in Syria, collision with wild border tribes kindled the fire of foreign war ; and forthwith the whole Arabian people, both town and Bedawi, were riveted to Islam by a common bond—the love of rapine and the lust for spoil. The exodus began with the tribes in the north, those first reclaimed from their apostasy. Later in the second year of the Caliphate, the war-cry spread to the south and grew in magnitude year by year....Warrior after warrior, column after column, whole tribes in endless succession with their women and children, issued forth to fight. And ever, at the marvellous tale of cities conquered of rapine rich beyond compute ; of maidens parted on the very field of battle "to every man a damsel or two"; and at the sight of the royal fifth set forth in splendour as it reached Medina;—fresh tribes rose and went. Onward and still onward, like swarms from the hive, or flights of locusts darkening the land, tribe after tribe issued forth and hastening northward, spread in great masses to the East and to the West."[1]

Furthermore, Sir William Muir, describing Khalid bin Walid's victory at Walaja, in Chaldaea, writes, "Khalid here struck a chord delightful to the Bedawi heart. Now, also, the inducements with respect to the other sex began to tell. Persian ladies, both maids and matrons, as 'captives of their right hand' were forthwith, without stint of number, and by permission which they held divine, lawful to the conqueror's embrace ; and, in the enjoyment of this privilege, they were nothing loth to execute upon the heathen 'the judgment written.' Thus religious fanaticism grew along with martial ardour both riveted by motives native to the Arab—fight and foray, spoil of war, and captive charms.[2]

1. *The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall*, p. 41.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

It is a graphic but deliberately biased statement of facts. It travesties the facts of centuries-old struggles of the Desert and the Sown, of the Nomads and Settled populations, coupled with the hunger and greed of the desert-dwellers for the riches and luxuries of the sedentary, urban communities.

Professor Becker, writing after Muir, takes a more scientific view. He says, "The question may in fact be put whether the whole movement is not conceivable without the intervention of Islam. There can in any case be no question of any zealous impulse towards proselytism. That strong religious tie which at the present time binds together all Muslims, that exclusive religious spirit of the later world of Islam, is at all events, not the primary cause of the Arab migration, but merely a consequence of the political and cultural conditions caused by it. In the outset Islam meant the supremacy of Medina, but it soon identified itself with Arabianism, *i.e.* it preached the superiority of the Arabian people generally. This great idea gives an intellectual purport to the restless striving for expansion. and makes a political focus of the great Arabian State of Medina, founded on religion. Hunger and avarice, not religion, are the impelling forces, but religion supplies the essential unity and central power. The expansion of the Saracens' religion, both in point of time and in itself, can only be regarded as of minor import and rather as a political necessity. The movement itself had been on foot long before Islam gave it a party cry and an organisation. Then it was that the minor streams of Arabian nationality gradually encroaching on the cultivated territory, united with the related elements already resident there and formed that irresistible migratory current which flooded the older kingdoms, and seemed to flood them suddenly."[1]

4. **The Caliphal Policy of National Defence of the Frontiers of the Republic of Medina**: A more plausible explanation of the Muslim conquests was the policy of Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, to ensure a thorough and vigorous defence of the frontiers of the newly-founded Republic of Medina, especially due to the recent struggles to suppress heresy and intrigue within the borders of the Peninsula. This was another effect of the Wars of Riddah. The Caliph fully realized the need to defend and consolidate the frontiers of the new Islamic State against the Byzantine and Persian incursions and intrigues, particularly after the experience of the battles of Mutah and Tabuk, the whirlwind incursion of the Mesopotamian Sajah. above all, of the Persian aid in arms and men to the Arab rebels of Bahrayn. (The outlying provinces of the Peninsula, such as Bahrayn, Yemen, the border region of Nufud, were always occupied or threatened with subju-

1. *Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. II, p. 332.

gation by the neighbouring empires of Rome or Persia.) The troubles of the Ridda Wars made the Caliph and his advisors in Medina all the more apprehensive and alert to the need for a vigorous defence of the frontiers against these neighbours. So the Caliph did send troops to garrison and defend the frontiers on the Syrian side, viz., Amr ibn al-As to Ayla on the Red Sea, and Khalid bin Said towards the Dead Sea, while he left the defence of the Persian borders to the Bedouin Chiefs of Banu Shayban, al-Muthanna, bin Haritha and others. Thus he endeavoured to grapple with the dangers from abroad, along with the dangers at home. In the Seventh century A. D., the political boundaries between the states and empires were not drawn so carefully and minutely as they are to-day. The result was that the commanders and troops of the rival states often came into collison rather than to eye each other peacefully across the pillars on the borders. It happened in this case too. The frontier troops and garrisons of Arabia and the Byzantines and the Persians came to blows which flared up into full-fledged battles that engulfed both in a mortal struggle. Thus the frontier clashes kindled the great wars of early Islam which led to the conquests.

5. **The Caliphal Policy of National Libration of the Arab Subjects of Rome and Persia** : Coupled with it was the Caliph's desire to liberate the Arab tribes subject to the rule of Persia and Rome. It was, more true of Umar, the second Caliph, than of Abu Bakr. In a way it was the extension of the nationalist urge of the Caliphs to include all Arab tribes in the domain of Islam, whether they dwelt within or beyond the borders of the Peninsula. The fact was that the Arab race dwelt far beyond the bounds of Arabia proper even in pre-Islamic times. They were partly Christians, like Banu Ghassan in Syria, Taghlib in Iraq and partly heathen, like Banu Bakr bin Wa'il, etc. They, however, lived in a miserable condition, which influenced Abu Bakr's policy to liberate them from foreign yoke. The German historian, Von Kremer, says that these Arab tribes actually aided the Muslim invanders in liberating them from alien masters. "Besides" he writes, " among their own countrymen, residing since remote antiquity in Syria and Iraq, they found secret as well as open allies. By reason of tribal sympathy or racial hatred, they rendered assistance to the conquering army. They acted as spies and not infrequently in open warfare." Nevertheless, this policy of national liberation was not so consciously conceived, nor so persistently pursued as we might imagine it in terms of the 20th century national liberation movements. In this respect the caliphal policy was more the result of circumstance than design. Even the Arab tribes in foreign lands were at first not allies but enemies of the Muslim liberators. It was only when the tide of war had definitely turned against their ancient masters that they were inclined to view the Arab invaders as their liberators, and sided

with them.

6. **Aggressive attitude of the Persian and Byzantine Empires :** The early Muslims did not wantonly hurl themselves against the mighty empires of Rome and Persia. The Arabs held them in too great a fear to attack them. Nevertheless, they were provoked to do so by the aggressive attitude of their mighty neighbours, who had however become too decrepit and disorganised to hold the Arabs in check as they used to do so successfully before. The invasion of the prophetess Sujah, the intervention of the Persian force in the rebellion in Bahrayn, the frequent Byzantine threats to invade Medina from its Syrian border, the Persian occupation of the Yemen and the recent battle of Dhu-Qar in 610 A. D,, were too recent and too fearful manifestations of the aggressive spirit of his powerful neighbours to be neglected by the Caliph of Medina. The aggressiveness by her powerful neighbours became the *casus belli* of the great Wars between Islam and Rome and Persia—though it was not the only cause.

7. **Tribal Migration** : Due to a more detailed knowledge and better understanding of the history of the Ancient East, especially of the Empires of antiquity, a new explanation of Islamic conquests is propounded by the present-day historians. According to them, the Islamic conquests were the result of tribal migration from the Arabian Peninsula, which had occurred at frequent intervals throughout the antiquity. The only difference was that while pre-Islamic tribal migrations were shrouded in darkness and limited in range, the migration of the Arab tribes under the inspiration of Islam and the direction of the Caliphs of Medina occurred in the full light of history and went much farther than the earlier ones. "Viewed in its proper perspective," writes Professor Hitti, "the Islamic expansion was one in a series of migration 'waves' which carried a surplus population from a barren peninsula to a bordering fertile region with a more abundant life. In fact it was the last stage in the age-long process of infiltration which had begun with the Babylonians some 4000 years before the Islamic, movement."[1] Professor Becker, an earlier writer writes more explicitly. "The sudden surging forward of the Arabs was only apparently sudden. For centuries previously the Arab migration had been in preparation. It was the last great Semitic migration connected with the economical decline of Arabia ... Ever since the commencement of our chronology the Arabs had been in fluctuation ... In short, long before Mahomet, Arabia was in a state of unrest and a slow, uncontrolable infiltration of Arabian tribes and tribal branches had permeated the adjoining civilised lands in Persian as also in Roman territory, where they had met with the descendants of earlier Semitic immig-

1. *A History of Arabs*, p. 141.

rants to those parts, the Aramaeans who were already long acclimitised there ... The expansion of the Saracens is thus the final stage in a process of development extending over centries. Islam was simply a change in the watchward for which they fought ; and thus arose at the same time an organisation which, based on religious and ethnical principles and crowned with unexpected success, was bound to attain a historical importance quite different from that of buffer states like Hira and Ghassan."

This is quite a sound theory. It explains the historic phenomenon of Islamic expansion as a series of tribal migrations, so common throughout the history of the world. It is a part of the struggle between the Desert and the Sown in ancient history. But it is not the whole explanation, for it alone would not explain why Islamic expansion was much greater and went much farther than all earlier migrations and why it was more durable and lasting than they. Our difficulties would increase if we keep in mind another "Islamic Migration" of the Arab tribes which occurred in the 11th century A.D., viz., the migration of Banu Salaym and Hilal, two Bedouin tribes, into Egypt and North Africa.

However, the fact is that Arabia of the Jahiliya period was in constant commotion due to successive migrations of the Yemeni tribes from the South to North Arabia and beyond. These successive 'waves' were set into motion by the bursting of the Ma'rib dam, or more properly, by the ruin of agriculture and settled economy of the Yemen in consequence of the destruction of its irrigation system. The emergence of Islam provided both incentive and direction to these migrations of the Arab tribes from their barren and inhospitable land into more fertile and abundant lands of Persia and Egypt.

8. **Economic Causes**: It is a great achievement of the modern science of history to analyse and discover the economic factors which determine the rise and fall of the peoples and empires. They were, however, not unknown to the Muslim historians of the Middle Ages, like Baladhuri, Ibn Khaldun and others.

The economic or more accurately, the socio-economic causes of the conquest and expansion of early Islam operated in a manner that can be explained in simple or and subtle terms. The simpler explanation—so much emphasised by the Western writers, not without malice towards Islam—is found in the barren and arid nature of the Peninisula, which created perpetual hunger and want among its inhabitants. Hence the Arabs were again and again migrating, invading and conquering the fertile and rich

1. *Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. II, p. 331.

countries around them. This obvious fact of the Arabian life has been very much dwelt upon by Sir William Muir in his explanation of "the Arabs' lure of loot and the lust for rapine" or by Professors Becker and Hitti in their explanation of "hunger and avarice" of the Arabs. The economic factors, however, go deeper than this superficial explanation.

The real economic factor was the inability of the tribal economy of Arabia—which, by the way, could alone exist in the barren and arid land of Arabia—to maintain an expanding population. The growth of population was further increased by the conditions of peace and security which Islam now established by forbidding feuds and wars among the tribes and clans. Moreover, Islam engendered social dynamism among the Arabs who were now not only united among themselves but eager to conquer new lands for God and Islam. Furthermore, Islamic laws of inheritance, family and property could work only in the expanding economy of foreign conquests and expansionism of the Arab tribes, and not in the narrow and strife-torn tribal system of pre-Islamic Jahiliya. Islamic revolution of the Holy Prophet transformed Arabia into a land of over-population as compared to its economic resources, which necessitated the migration of the surplus population to foreign lands.

At the same time, the feudal economy of the Persian and Byzantine Empires was in decay due to political anarchy, over-taxation, religious persecutions, imperial wars, administrative neglect to repair canals and dykes in Iraq, Egypt, etc. For instance, the fertile lands of Lower Iraq, known as Chaldaea, were turned into marshes and swamps owing to the failure to remove silt from the water-channels by the Persian officials and landlords (who were one and the same people) during the political anarchy of the later Sassanid rulers. These reasons caused social misery among the subject peoples of the Persian and Byzantine Emperors, lowered their will to resist Arab invaders, especially as the latter lightened their tax burdens, repaired the irrigation canal system and restored conditions of peace and order. So, it was not merely the hunger and avarice of the Arab Bedouins, but the socio-economic dynamism of the Arab people, regenerated by Islam, coupled with the political decline and economic decay of their great neighbours of Persia, Iraq, Syria and Egypt, which really explain the miracle of the conquest and expansion of early Islam. Hunger and avarice would explain the tribal migrations of the pre-Islamic Arabs. But the conquests and migrations under Islam can be properly explained by the Bedouin hunger and want, *plus* the social dynamism, social frequency or mobility of the early Muslims, *plus* the economic decadence in the Persian Empire and in the Provinces of Syria and Egypt and North Africa of the Byzantine Empire. It was in such econo-

mic, social and political conditions that early Muslim Arabs conquered and migrated to foreign lands.

In conclusion, early Islamic conquests and expansion were inspired by Islam, directed and guided by the Caliphs of Medina, prompted by the political necessity to maintain unity and peace among the Arab tribes, and determined by the political social and economic decadence of the lands and people of the empires of Persia and Byzantium. The immediate cause of these conquests were the border troubles due to the chronic insecurity of the Persian and Byzantine frontiers of Arabia.

CHAPTER 17

CONQUESTS OF ABU BAKR

The immediate cause of the wars of conquest of early Islam was the collision on the borders between the Arab tribes and troops and those of the Persians and the Byzantines, which flared up into full-fledged wars between the forces of Medina and the armies of Persia and the Byzantium. The border collision arose inevitably from the political geography of the neighbouring provinces of the two Empires, which were first invaded and conquered during the short reign of Caliph Abu Bakr. We shall begin with the conquest of the Persian province of Chaldaea or Lower Iraq.

(1) Conquest of Chaldaea and Hira :

Geography of Iraq. Persians Empire of the Sassanids was a vast territory, extending from the eastern banks of the Euphrates in the west almost upto the western banks of the Indus in the east. Of this vast empire, Iraq was the home-province, with its capital at al-Madain, as the Arabs called. Iraq is an ancient birthplace of human civilisation which has seen many vicissitudes during its long history. On the eve of Arab invasion, Iraq was divided in two distinct parts : viz., (1) Upper Iraq. (2) Lower Iraq.

Upper Iraq, which the Arabs called al-Jazirah, is a mountainous tract, bound by the two rivers, the Euphrates on the west and the Tigris on the east, It was then not occupied by the Arab tribes.

Lower Iraq or Chaldaea, as it was then known, bordered on the Arabian province of Bahrayn and the Persian Gulf. It was, indeed, the delta of the two rivers. It was then a fertile plain, watered by a number of canals and streams, branching from the Euphrates and the Tigris. Its canal system was of ancient origin and one of the marvels of the ancient peoples of Iraq. The Sassanids had also either repaired or constructed these canals. One of these canals branched off from the Euphrates near Hira from a channel in the live rock, cut by the hands of the ancient Iraqis. On the eve of Arab conquest, it was in a state of neglect, with the result that Lower Iraq was turned into a number of marshes and lagoons, filled with reeds and bushes, where roamed robbers, buffaloes and fish-eaters' tribes. Another canal, dug probably in the days of the great Sassanid king, Shapur, and known as "the Canal of Shapur or Sapor", branched off from the Euphrates still further upstream. It

made a wider circuit around Hira on the west of the river and irrigated a large part of the desert before it fell into the Persian Gulf near the city of Ubulla, the provincial headquarters of Chaldaea. It served two purposes. It transformed a large desert territory into a fertile land, thus illustrating man's ancident struggle against the sands of the encroaching desert. But it also served as defence line of the Persians, for it obstructed the raiding Arab tribes to its south and west. However, during the anarchy and decline of the later Sassanids, the great "Canal of Sapor" was also neglected and silted up. It was, therefore, no longer an obstruction to the Arab tribes.

A little before the rise of Islam, between 601-611 A.D., the Bedouin raids increased in frequency, which culminated in a full scale war between the Arabs and the Persians. The Arab Bedouins, mostly of Banu-Shayban of the Bakr tribe, won a victory over the Persians in the battle of Dhu-Qar in or about 610 A. D. It was one of the first victories of the Arabs before they marched against Persia under the banner of Islam in the days of Abu Bakr. Though this victory infused confidence in the hearts of the Bedouin tribes, it did not lead to any permanent result, for they lacked resources in both men and material and above all in political centralism and leadership. It was the Republic of Medina that supplied them both, as we shall presently describe.

Owing to its fertile soil and the abundance of its running water, the Arabs called the land of Chaldaea as-Sawad, the black soil. In their eyes it was the "*Jannat*" or "garden of the world". Its fertile lands were owned by Persian "*Dihqans*" or landlords, but cultivated by Arab "*fellahin*" or serfs. It was highly populated, with the international trade routes passing through it.

History of the Kingdom of Hira: Being a frontier province, Chaldaea was a target of Bedouin raids since long. The Persians had built a number of fortresses on its border as a defence against the Arabs. In course of time, they even transformed the border Arab Kingdom of Hira into a dependency to defend their empire. About the beginning of the third century A. D., the fertile land west of the Euphrates was occupied by the tribe of Tanukh of South Arabian origin. It happened at the time of the fall of the Arsacid dynasty and the rise of the Sassanids in Persia. The Chiefs of Banu Lakhm, a clan of Azd, a confederate of Tanukh, founded the kingdom of Hira as a vassal of the rising Sassanid dynasty with whom they allied themselves against the Arsacids. The Tanukh lived, like all Bedouins, in tents. Their temporary camp gradually evolved into a town, called al-Hirah, which meant "the camp" in old Syriac.

The Kingdom was founded by **Malik bin Fahm al-Azdi,** a vassal of the Sassanid King, Ardashir (202-242 A.D). But it soon passed into the hands of **Amr bin Adi bin Nasr bin Rabia bin Lakhm**. Amr was the son of Malik bin Fahm's daughter. The Lakhmids produced a number of famous kings of Hira, renowned for their patronage of Arab poets, for their lavish bounties, their splendid castles, and courts. The first among them was **Imr-ul Qays** (died 328 A.D). Another was **an-Numan al-Awar** (one-eyed) who ruled between 400-18 A.D., with great pomp and patronage of poets. He was a great builder of castles, and built the two famous fortresses, named *al-Khawarnaq* and *al-Sadir*, considered as miracles of architecture. He persecuted his Christian subjects cruelly. The greatest of the Lakhmids was **al-Mundhir III** (505-54). The Persian Emperors now used their vassal-kingdom as a cat's paw in their wars against the Byzantine Empire. Al-Mundhir raided the neighbouring territories of the Ghassanids, a vassal-state of the Byzantines. He defeated Byzantine armies on several occasions. He thus proved a thorn in the side of Byzantine Syria. His son and successor was **Amr bin Hind,** known after his mother. He died in 569 A.D., and with his death the Lakhmid dynasty declined. **An-Numan III, Abu Qabus** (586-602) proved to be the last of the Lakhmids. Hira Kingdom was then annexed to Chaldaea by the Persians, and a Persian resident was appointed in the capital. But this annexation proved to be unwise, for it paved the way for Bedouin raids into Persian territory. These raids led to the battle of Dhu Qar in 610, the first Arab victory over the Persians and ultimately to Khalid bin Walid's invasion in 633 and the conquest of Chaldaea under Abu Bakr.

Political Decline of the Sassanids : No time would have been more propitious for the Arab invasion of Chaldaea than the days of Abu Bakr's Caliphate. The great Sassanid dynasty, held in so much awe and respect by the Arabs, was fast tottering to its downfall. **Chosroes II,** (590-628 A.D.) known as **Khusraw Parwez,** launched a great war against his Byzantine rivals in 610 A.D. and snatched Armenia, Cappadocia, and Syria from them. In 616 A.D. the Persian army invaded and conquered Egypt, another Byzantine province. The Persians even laid siege to Constantinople, which, however, provoked the Byzantine counter-attack under their new and energetic Emperor Heraclius. He drove the Persians not only out of Asia Minor, but also inflicted a defeat on Chosroes II in the battle of Ninevah and laid siege to his capital. Soon after, Chosroes II was captured and put to death by the orders of his son, Siroes, in 628 A.D. The murderer of the father soon became the murderer of the brothers. It is said that Siroes put to death eighteen of his brothers. But he died a mad man within three months of his accession. These dastardly acts, however, put to an end the geat Sassanid dynasty. Only little infants and women

remained in the royal dynasty to sit on the imperial throne. Siroes was succeeded by his infant son, **Ardashir II**, a mere boy of seven. But he was soon deposed and killed by **Shahrbaraz**, who in his turn was killed within forty days of his accession (June 9, 630 A.D.) by three of his bodyguards. Now no male descendant of the Sassanids was available to be placed on the throne. So the courtiers and grandees of the Empire placed a daughter of Chosroes II, named **Puran-dukht**, on the throne. She ruled well, but died sixteen months after her accession. She was followed by her distant cousin, **Firoz**, who ruled only for a month. Then the grandees chose a female, named **Azarmi-dukht**, a sister of Firoz, as the next ruler. It was in her reign that the Arab invasion began. But she was killed within six months of her accession by one of her grandees, Rustam, to avenge the death of his father at her hands. Then came half a dozen of more weaklings on the Imperial throne, whose reigns were as brief as they were inglorious. At last in 634 A.D. the courtiers discovered another Sassanid descendant, named **Yazdjard III** and placed him on the throne. He proved to be the last of the Sassanids. Thus, in a short period, as Gibbon writes, "the royal title was assumed by nine candidates who disputed, with the sword or dagger, the fragments of an exhausted monarchy."

The rapid changes on the imperial throne portended ill for the ancient dynasty of Persia, for they brought in their train innumerable evils and misfortunes for the distracted Empire. Exhausted by the great wars against the Byzantines, taxation and other exactions, the country was rampant with anarchy, and swept by passions and rivalries of the courtiers and grandees, satraps and soldiers. The royal princes became mere pawns in the hands of rival factions, and were crowned only to be assassinated within a few months. The powerful satraps, who were both governors of the provinces and generals of the armies, treated their provinces as their own fiefs and became virtually independent of the imbecile court at al-Madain. The Sassanid Empire was virtually divided into several independent kingdoms in the provinces,—a perfect picture of feudal anarchy. In these petty kingdoms there was no group or individual capable of opposing the Arab advance. As is usual in the whole history of Asia in general and of Iraq in particular, political anarchy heralded a deep socio-economic crisis in the Empire. The irrigational system of Chaldaea was neglected, with the result that the fertile lands of Lower Iraq turned virtually into swamps, infested with robbers and wild animals. Social misery of the people, especially of the peasanty, increased. They groaned under a heavy burden of ever-increasing taxes which were squandered away by the faction-ridden and extravagant court and nobility. The defences of the Empire were neglected. Such are the times when old empires fall and new arise. The death-knell

of the Sessanids was sounded when Hazrat Abu Bakr despatched Khalid bin Walid to the aid of al-Mathanna.

Al-Mathanna invades Chaldaea. On the borders of Chaldaea, between Yemama and Hira, the North Arabian Modarite tribe of Bakr bin Wa'il led a nomadic life. It was divided into various independent branches, which formed part of the restless border tribes against which Hira had been erected as a bulwark by the Sassanids. Among these branches was the famous clan of Banu Shayban. It had won the celebrated victory over the Persians in the battle of Dhu-Qar in 610 A. D. In Abu Bakr's days this clan was headed by a chief, named al-Muthanna bin Haritha. While the armies of the Caliph were busy suppressing apostasy in other parts of Arabia, Al-Muthanna, perhaps not yet a Muslim, was engaged in raiding Persian territories on the borders of Chaldaea. Advancing along the Persian Gulf, he reduced al-Qatif and penetrated into the delta of the Euphrates. But, as he advanced further into Chaldaea, he met with stiffening resistance from the Persians and their Bedouin subject tribes. He had neither men nor resources to conquer the Persian province by himself. He decided to seek the aid of the Caliph of Medina, whose armies under Khalid bin Walid had recently won resounding victories against the rebels, and whose dominion now extended over the whole Peninsula. So he visited Medina, where his fame as a Bedouin warrior against the Persians, had already reached. He professed Islam at the hands of the Caliph, along with other Chiefs of Banu Bakr. He then received the command of the Caliph to "march forward in the Delta fighting in the way of the Lord." He also requested the Caliph to send Khalid bin Walid to his assistance. The request was accepted. Khalid, who was still at Yemama since his victory over Musaylima, was ordered by the Caliph to go to the help of al-Mathanna. At the same time the Caliph also ordered Iyaz bin Ghanam to march at the head of another army against Hira. The Caliph declared that whoever reached the city first would be in command of the country.*

*We here enter upon conflicting traditions. There are, indeed, two schools of thought regarding the out-break of war between the Arabs and the Persians. According to one, which we have partly adopted here, al-Muthanna initiated hostillities, a Bedouin raider as he was, before his adoption of Islam. But he got into difficulties and, therefore, hurried to Medina to seek Caliph's aid. Hazrat Abu Bakr at this time had no idea or intention of conquering any Persian province at all. But he decided to accept al-Muthanna's request for assistance. Firstly, the victorious army of Khalid bin Walid was now free to be despatched elsewhere, as its task of suppressing apostasy was over. Secondly, he wanted the tribe of Banu Bakr to fight in the ways of Allah, lest they might lapse into apostasy once again.

The other view, upheld by most Western writers, like Professor Becker, is that the Bakr tribe did not accept Islam at all, and that Abu Bakr had no intention at all to conquer Chaldaea. It was al-Muthanna who invited Khalid,

Khalid Conquers Chaldaea and Hira

Khalid joins Muthanna and assumes the command: On receiving Caliph's order, Khalid left Yemama for the borders of Chaldaea with a force of 500 men. But he attracted many volunteers on the route till his army swelled to 10,000 men. Yet the former apostates and rebels were expressly forbidden to join the Muslim army. Khalid marched north, avoiding the marches of Lower Euphrates and met al-Mathanna at Khaffan. The Bedouin Chief, with his 8,000 men, at once placed himself under the command of Khalid. Khalid then addressed a letter to Hormuz, the satrap of Chaldaea in these words : "*Accept Islam and you are safe, or else pay tribute, both you and your people. If you refuse, you shall have yourself to blame. You have to fight a people who love death as you love life.*" After thus declaring war, Khalid advanced into Chaldaea in three columns, commanded by himself, al-Muthanna and Adi bin Hatim at-Tayi.

Battle of the Chains ; April, 633. Khalid's letter startled Hormuz, the Persian Satrap (Marzuban) of Chaldaea. Though he regarded Khalid as nothing more than one of the Bedouin raiders, who had for centuries harassed the Persian Governors of the frontier provinces like Chaldaea, yet he found the tone and style of his letter frightening. So, he forwarded the letter to the Chosroes, the King Ardeshir, with the request to send reinforcements. In the meanwhile, he himself marched against the invaders. He reached the border near al-Hafir and took possession of its springs. Khalid also reached the place and found the Persians in occupation of the springs. He at once launched an attack on the enemy. In a single combat, he killed Hormuz, the Persian

to his assistance when he got into difficulties with the Persians. And "Khalid's reckless plunger that he was seized with avidity this opportunity for fresh deed of valour" (Becker). The Caliph was quite unaware of it. Nevertheless, he gave his consent to it, when it came to his notice later. Even then he did not anticipate a permanent conquest, or occupation of Chaldaea and did not send any army against Hira under the command of Iyaz; "for the aims of Khalid and his Master widened as victory led him onwards." (Muir). The tribe of Bakr sought Muslim assistance as "a screen for their rear" and also to continue their raids into the cultivated territory." Becker adds: "The Shaiban, like all the other components of the Bakr ibn-Wa'il were wholly independent of Medina, and had no intention of becoming Muslims—and the conversion of the head of the tribes was no part of his (Abu Bakr's) plan, much less the conversion of the tribes themselves. They certainly from this time onward were in touch with Medina and regarded themselves as in political alliance with the Muslims: and in the rapid developments of the next few years they were merged in the Caliph's dominions." (Medieval Hist. Vol. II p. 338). In short, according to this view, the conquests of Abu Bakr were the results of chance and drift, rather than of plan and design. But the truth lies between these two views. It is therefore necessary that conflicting traditions should be carefully and scientifically scrutinized.

Commander. A general fighting then commenced and after a stiff resistance the Persians were defeated. As the fighting took place in a narrow place and the Persian soldiers were tied by chains, the battle came to be known as the Battle of the Chains or *Dhat as-Salasil*. A large booty fell into Arab hands, providing a share of a thousand dirhams to every soldier. An elephant was also captured and was sent to Medina as a war-trophy, where it was an object of wonder for the citizens. But it was sent back as it was found difficult to feed it with meagre pastures in Arabia.

The defeated army fled across the Euphrates towards Ubulla, pursued by the Arab cavalry under al-Muthanna. Near Ubulla, the seat of Chaldaean Satrap, the fugitive army joined a new Persian army under Qaran, sent by the King to the help of Hormuz on receipt of his request for reinforcements. Al-Muthanna found himself confronted with a large force and requested Khalid to come to his assistence. Khalid rushed forward and met a large Persian army under Qaran near Mazar on the bank of the Great Canal running out of the Tigris near Ubulla at the head of the Persian Gulf. The Persians were again routed after fierce battle at Mazar. Many of them were drowned while crossing the Great Canal.

Battle of Walaja. April, 633. The Imperial court was now thoroughly aroused by continuous reverses of its armies. The Chosroes, Ardashir II, sent two armies, one under Bahman and the other under a prince of the royal blood. At the same time, the Persians also raised a levy of the Christain branches of the great Bakr tribe. The Imperial policy was now to make the Arabs fight the Arabs. The combined Persian and Bakrite forces in various columns advanced towards al-Walaja, near the junction of the Tigris and the Euphrates, to attack Khalid's army from three directions. It was a critical moment for him. But by rapid marches, Khalid surprised the combined enemy at Walaja. The Muslims at once started fighting and completely defeated them. The Persian prince fled towards the desert where he died of thirst. The fleeing Persians were ambushed by the soldiers. Many Christian Arab allies of the Persians were also killed or captured.

Battle of Ullays : May, 633. The great Bakr tribe had in fact been divided in its allegiance. Its Christian clans threw their lot with their Persian masters, while others joined Khalid and al-Muthanna.The Christian Bakrite Chiefs, angered by their defeat at Walaja, appealed to the Chosroes for fresh troops to avenge their defeat. They assembled at Ullays, a place between Hira and Ubulla in the Delta. There they were joined by the Persian army under Jaban. Khalid found himself again in a critical situation. But in

his characteristic manner, he took the enemy by surprise by quick marches against them. When Khalid arrived, the Persians and the Christians had just seated for repast. They believed that Khalid's exhausted troops would tarry before starting battle. Khalid did not rest his soldiers, but hurled them at once against the unwary enemy. Fighting ensued and was bitterly contested. But the Persians and Christian Arabs were defeated. The leader of the Christian tribe was slain. The defeated enemy fled, leaving their repast unfinished, which the Muslim soldiers enjoyed afterwards. A large number of Persians were taken captives and a great booty taken. As usual the fifth share of the state was sent to Medina, where the Caliph was much pleased with the tales of Muslim victories.

Conquest of Hira : Soon after his victory at Ullays, Khalid turned northward towards Hira, leaving al-Muthanna to reduce the Delta. On the way, he captured Amghishiya (or Numghishia), a town of some importance, without any resistance. Rich spoils of war were also taken there. Khalid continued his advance towards Hira along the bank of the Euphrates. On reaching Hira, he captured the castles and cultivated lands of the Persian and Arab chiefs of Hira outside the walls of the city, which was now besieged. The Persian satrap fled across the Euphrates before Khalid's arrival. In fact, the Imperial court at al-Madain was in paralysis. Ardashir II had died and the courtiers and grandees were querrelling among themselves over the choice of the next ruler, as none was found among the male progency of the Chosroes. The Christian Arab Chiefs of Hira were, therefore, left to themselves to bear the brunt of Khalid's attack. Their courage sank, especially when they saw their lands and fields ravaged by the invaders. They decided to make peace with Khalid under a treaty. It was the first treaty made by the Muslims with a conquered people beyond the frontiers of Arabia.

The Treaty of Hira : The terms of the treaty were : *"Rabbi'l Awwal,* 12 *A. H. In the name of Allah, the Beneficent and the Merciful. This treaty is agreed upon between Khalid and the Christian Chiefs of Hira, Adi and Amr, the sons of Adi, Amr bin Abdul Masih, Ayash bin Qabisa and Khayri bin Aqqab, the reprsentatives of the inhabitants of al-Hira. It is concluded that from amongst the people of Hira those of wordly means* will *pay one lac and ninety thousand dirhams* (according to another version 60,000 dirhams) *as Jizya. The destitues, the poor and the religious mendicants will be exempted from these payments. The basis of this payment is protection which is the responsibility of Muslims. If I, Khalid ibn-al-Walid did fail to give them protection of life and property, then this poll-tax will not be collected from them. But if the agreement is violated by the people of Hira, either*

in word or deed, they will forfeit all claims to the aforesaid protection."

Under the Treaty, Hira remained Christian, secure in its freedom of religion and worship. After the conclusion of the treaty, the gates of Hira were opened and the Muslims entered the city. Khalid made it his headquarters and established the administration of the newly conquered provinces of Hira and Chaldaea.

Paralysis in Persia : The Imperial Government at al-Madain was paralysed by the death of Ardeshir II. The fratricidal murders of Siroes (Shirue) had virtually wiped out all the male progency of the Chosroes. After many plots and killings, the grandees at last placed Puran Dukht on the Imperial throne. Thus paralysed, the Persian did little against the Arab invaders of Chaldaea, except defend al-Madain by holding in force country between the Tigris and the Nahr Shir (the sweet water canal) which flowed from the river across the Delta. Though al-Muthanna was pressing hard against this line of defence, the Caliph had expressly forbidden further advance towards al-Madain beyond this line. However, he ordered Khalid to advance against the Christian Arab tribes dwelling beyond Hira to the west of the Euphrates.

Khalid takes al-Anbar : The Christian Arab tribes, especially Banu Taghlib, became restless and agressive after Khalid's victories over their fellow-Christians of Banu Bakr. They started gathering at al-Anbar, a fortress in the north of Hira on the bank of the Euphrates. Khalid led his army against them and captured it after a brief siege. He next marched against Ayn-al-Tamr in the desert, where the agressive Taghlib tribes had assembled in strength. This was the tribe which had supported the prophetess Sajah in her march on Yemama. Khalid inflicted a defeat on this great Christian tribe also. He then reducd several fortresses and garrisons of the Arab Christians, especially of Banu Taghlib, who were punished for their persistent opposition to the Muslims. Their men were killed and women and children were sold as slaves. Among these children was Nusayr the father of Musa, the conqueror of Spain.

Khalid conquers Duma : September 633 : While Khalid was winning victory after victory in Chaldaea, Ayas bin Ghanam failed to advance beyond Dumat ul Jandal in North Arabia. He was ordered to attack Chaldaea from the north. But the Christian Arab tribes, e.g., the Kelb, Ghassan and others, were summoned by the Christian Chiefs of Duma, Ukaydir and al-Jaudi, from the borders of Syria. Their combined forces placed

Ayaz in a peril. This danger made the Caliph anxious, who ordered Khalid to go to his rescue. His courier reached Khalid just after his capture of Ayn al-Tamr. Khalid immediately led his troops towards Duma. His advance changed the situation at once. His very name was a tower of strength. Ukaydir, whom Khalid had already once defeated in the days of the Holy Prophet, lost courage and endeovoured to flee, but was captured and killed. Then both Khalid and Ayaz stormed Duma from Persian (eastern) and Syrian (westren) sides and utterly routed the Christian tribes. Their men were killed and women and children sold into slavery. After resting in Duma for a few days, Khalid returned to Hira.

Battle of Firaz : January, 634. In the absence of Khalid, Banu Taghlib again became restive and aggressive. They assembled near Ayn al-Tamr. Khalid at once despatched an advance party under al-Qaqa and followed with the main force. On the way he defeated a Persian garrison and cut down the Christian Bedouins in various places. He pursued the defeated Christians upto the very borders of the Byzantine and Persian empires at Firaz. Confronted with a hostile army, the Romans, as the Arabs called the Byzantines, and the Persians and Christian Arabs forgot their past enmity and combined to fight Khalid. Though their combined forces were said to be as large as one lakh soldier's, Khalid inflicted utter defeat on them after a long and severe conflict. With this victory, Khalid's victorious campaign in Chaldaea came to an end within less than a year of its opening in March or April, 633. He returned to Hira. But he was soon ordered by Abu Bakr to go to the help of the Muslim armies fighting in Syria.

Administration of Chaldaea : The Muslim invaders of Chaldaea were no Bedouin raiders to plunder and return home. They had conqured the province to rule and administer it. As soon as a town or a territory was subdued by Khalid, the Caliph despatched to him detailed instructions about its adminstration.

The Persian Chosroes had ruled Chaldaea through their satraps or Marzuban and the local Dihqans, who were landlords cum-administrators or tax-collectors. After the defeat of the Persians, the satraps fled towards Al-Madain. But the Dihqans tendered their submission to the Arab conquerors on conditions of remaining peaceful and paying tribute to the Muslims. The Caliph had instructed that the peasanty or "fellahin" were not to be deprived of their possessions. Indeed, Khalid bin Walid protected them against the Persian tax-collectors and encouraged them in their peaceful labour. Their rights as cultivators and owners of land were respected by the Muslims. They were to pay

land revenue as before, but a light poll-tax or Jizya was imposed. Thus the former Persian subjects became *Ahl-al-Dhimma or Dhimmis*, the people of protection or trust. Khalid stationed troops at various places in the province and kept them in readiness to march against any attempt at revolt. Thus the life and property of all was secure, except those who fought or revolted against the Muslims. The revenues, collected as poll-tax and tribute as well as booty, were distributed among the soldiers "for the strengthening of their will and raising their courage". The land revenue was collected by the Dihqans under the supervision of the Arab tax-collectors appointed by Khalid.

A review of Chaldaean conquest : A survey of the Chaldaean conquest shows that the primary aims of the Caliph were (1) to encourage the newly converted Bedouins to fight in the way of Allah and to spread Islam, and (2) to bring the Christian Arab tribes within the dominion of Islam. He had no desire to conquer Persia, as is clear from his instructions not to advance beyond Ubulla and Nahr Shir. He also did not compel the Persians or Christian Arabs to adopt Islam. They were only required to remain loyal and peaceful and pay the tribute and poll-tax, as agreed between them and the Muslims. Even the vanquished people did not regard the Muslim invaders as Muslims but as Arabs of the Modarite extraction. This is illustrated by the laments of a Hira poet after its fall. He said :

> "*Now that the horsemen of an-Numan are passed away, shall I ever again feed the young she-camel on the pastures between Mecca and Hefir* ?
>
> *Like a flock of goats on a stormy day, we are scattered by the Bani Ma' add* (i. e., the invading Muslims), *even as pieces of camels slaughtered for the feast*."

II. Invasion of Syria

Geography of Syria and Palestine : Next to Iraq, Syria (including Palestine) is the most ancient land in Western Asia. It was also the best known to the Arabs, who called it ash-Sham— i. e. that land on the left, when one faces east. Its fertile valleys, rich cities, and towns and flourishing markets had long been visited by the Arabs as nomads, merchants and traders. It had indeed, cast a spell over the "sons of the desert" due to its riches, its luxuries, its fertility and its cool and well-watered valleys, woods and pasture-lands.

Syria (including Palestine) is a long strip of land, bounded by the coast of the Mediterranian Sea in the west and the Euphrates

in the east, the foothills of the Plateau of Asia Minor in the north, and the desert of Sinai at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba and the Arabian Nafud in the south. Geographically, it can be divided into certain distinct regions. In the north, as one descends from the plateau of Asia Minor, are the rolling lowlands and valleys from Aleppo to Damascus, with the mountain range of Lebanon to its west. This is Syria proper. Coming down to the south is the vast desert, called *Badiyat ash-Sham* or the desert of Syria. It is a dry and barren desert, more of stones, than of sand. It is one of the most difficult territory to inhabit or travel through. But its western edge has several fertile valleys, like the Bilqa, Hawran, etc. To its west is the Jordan river and the Dead Sea. Between the Jordan and the Mediterranean is the ancient land of Palestine, the holy land of Christianity and Islam, with Jerusalem on a hill at the head of the Dead Sea. To the south of Palestine is the desert of Sinai and the red Sea and to its west is Egypt. To the south-east of Palestine is Arabia. Indeed, the Desert of Syria gradually merges with the Nefud or the desert of Hijaz and Najd. The towns of Gaza and Arish on the Mediterranean coast separate Palestine from Egypt. The desert-towns of Maab, Muta, Tabuk and Ayla separate Syria from Arabia. Firaz, Qarqisiya, Raqqa and Roha (Edessa) on the Euphrates are the border towns between Syria and Upper Iraq. The climate is hot and dry in the south, but mild and rainy in the north and west along the Mediterranean coast.

Peoples of Syria. On the eve of the Muslim invasion, Syria was a land of several races, religions and cultures, though politically it was a part of the Byzantine Empire. The Greeks, the Aramaeans and the Arabs inhabited it. The Arabs were new-comers and dwelt mostly in the Desert of Syria between Ayla and Damascus. They cosisted of several tribes. Most of them, especially those which dwelt in the north were Christians, like the great tribe of Ghassan. Those tribes which lived on the fringes of Syria were partly Christians and partly heathens, like the Kelb, and those which lived on the Arab side of the border were more pagan than Christian, like the Quza'a, Judham, etc. Like Christianity, their allegiance and attachment to the Byzantine Empire decreased proportionately to the distance from the Syrian border. Banu Ghassan were really Byzantine subjects Banu Kelb were less so, while the Quza'a and Judham were least so. Nevertheless all of these tribes were politically within the sphere of influence of the Byzantines.

Religiously also Syria was a divided land. The Greeks were Orthodox Christians, the official religion of the Byzantine Empire. Schism prevailed in Christianity. A majority of the native Syrians and Arab Christians belonged to Monophysite Christianity,

for which they were severely persecuted by the Byzantine Emperor, Heraclius. The Christian tribes near the Persian borders were Nestorians, another Christian sect.

The Ghassanids of Bosra. Banu Ghassan were a Yemenite tribe which migrated to Syria from the Yemen after a great breach of the Mar'ib dam in the middle of the third century A. D. Like the Christian tribe of Hira, the Ghassan tribe also established a kingdom at Bosra (also called Bostra in early times) on the Dead Sea. It was founded by Jafna bin Amr, and was, therefore, known as the Jafnid Kingdom of Bosra. More than a dozen of the Jafnid Kings ruled this Syrio-Arabian principality. In the fourth century they adopted Christianity. Al-Harith bin Jabalah (529-69) was a great patron of poets, like his rivals, the Lakhmid Chiefs of Hira. In fact, just as the Lakhmids were the vassals of Persia, the Jafnids became those of the Byzantine Empire. The two principalities often fought with each other. Due to his wars with the Persian vassals, Emperor Justinian I conferred the highest Roman title of Phylarch and Patricius on Al-Harith. His son, Al-Mandhir (569-82 A. D) a contemporary of the Prophet, aroused the suspicion of the Emperor, who arrested and exiled him to Sicily.

With his fall, the Jafnid dynasty virtually came to end and the Kingdom split up into several petty chieftainships. In 610 A. D. they were conquered by Khusraw Parwez, the Emperor of Persia. In 629 A. D. Emperor Heraclius drove the Persians out of Syria and restored the Ghassanid rulers to their former dependence on the Byzantines. One of these rulers was Jabalah bin Ayham who fought against the Muslims under Khalid at Duma. The Ghassanids were on the Byzantine side when the Arabs invaded Syria. Their prince, Jabalah, fought against them under the banner of Heraclius in the battle of Yarmuk. He accepted Islam a little later. But then he renounced it when Caliph Umar ordered him to be slapped for slapping a Bedouin who accidentally stepped on his royal robes. He fled to the Byzantine territories in Asia Minor and died there.

Immediate Causes of Arab Invasion: As we have said above, the two great World Powers of ancient times, Persia and the Byzantium, were at loggerheads with each other for more than a century. Only four years before the Arab invasion, Emperor Heraclius, an energetic and warlike ruler, had driven out the Persians from Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt. But this great war cost him too much and he ran into debt with the Church. He was, however, eager to fight a holy war against the rising Republic of Medina. He raised an army of his Christian Arab tribes with a view to attack Medina, and won the battle of Mutah against the Muslims in the days of the Holy Prophet. The people of Medina were in constant

fear of the Byzantine aggression. Tabuk and Usama's expeditions were due to this fear. As soon as Hazrat Abu Bakr had suppressed heresy and rebellion in Arabia, he despatched one expedition after another first to guard the borders against Byzantine incursions and then to subdue Syria. This was one of the causes of the outbreak of hostilities between the Muslims and the Byzantines.

But mixed with this cause was the disaffection of some of the border tribes against the Byzantine Empire, which manifested itself in the form of Bedouin raids into Syrian territories. The Emperor used to give subsidies to the Bedouin tribes on the border in order to ensure their loyalty and eagerness to fight the enemies of the Empire. After the battle of Mutah, the Emperor decided to stop the subsidies of these tribes, in order to save money. But this economy alienated the Bedouin tribes, like those of Banu Quza'a and Judham. They now decided to throw in their lot with the Muslims. Already the suppression of the apostates had made the Caliph a power to reckon with. They resolved to join the Muslims in a war against the Byzantines, and thus recompense themselves for the loss of subsidy by plundering raids. These raids developed into a war of conquest. Thus the tribes of Judham and Quza'a played the same role of initiating the war between Medina and the Byzantines as did that of Shayban between Medina and Persia.

Abu Bakr and Byzantine Syria: The relations between the Muslims and Byzantines were strained since the battle of Mutah in the days of the Prophet. The Muslims viewed the Byzantine Power with great fear and suspicion. In fact, the Caliph regarded Byzantine Syria as a greater and more direct danger to the security of Medina than the Persian Empire. It was for this reason that he despatched Usama's expedition to the Syrian frontiers the very next day he was elected as Caliph. The rebellion and heresy of the Arab tribes made him all the more apprehensive of the Byzantine designs. But during the Wars of Apostasy he could do nothing against them except to adopt some defensive measures.

Khalid bin Sa'id's Expedition: While the wars of Apostasy were still going on, the Caliph sent Khalid bin Sa'id to the northern border in command of a force to rally the Christian Arab tribes and keep a watch on the movements of the Byzantines. He was expressly warned against offensive action against them. However, Khalid bin Sa'id disregarded the Caliph's instructions and heedlessly penetrated far into the Syrian territory, reaching as far as Marj as-Soffar near Lake Tiberias. The Greeks then surrounded the Muslim force and inflicted a defeat on them, killing a son of Khalid bin Sa'id. Khalid and a few others escaped to Arabia with difficulty. His reverse forced the Caliph to adopt more energetic measures to meet Byzantine danger effectively. The wars of Apos-

tasy were coming to a close, and victorious Muslim troops were returning to Medina. It was at this time that Abu Bakr resolved to wage a war against the Byzantines in a more organised manner. He harangued the returning soldiers to volunteer for a war against the Romans, as the Arabs called the Byzantines. At first the people of Medina were reluctant to do so. But soon the Caliph was able to raise small columns to be sent against by Byzantines. He despatched them in four successive detachments under commanders chosen and appointed by him.

Four Divisions : First of all the Caliph sent Yezid bin Abu Sufyan with a force of about 5000 men. Yezid also had with him his brother, Muawiya as his standard bearer. Next he sent another division of 5000 men under the command of Shurahbil ibn Hasna. Both were first to advance together against Tabuk, from where Yezid was to advance against Damascus and Shurahbil towards Central Syria. A third force under Amr ibn al-As was sent towards Ayla on the Gulf of Aqaba (Red Sea), from where it was to conquer southern Syria or Palestine. These armies were despatched in April, 634 A. D. Some times later, as fresh troops poured into Medina, the Caliph despatched a fourth column under the command of Abu Ubaydah al-Jarrah, one of the earliest converts and a very close Companion of the Prophet. He held the supreme command over the other three commanders. Thus, in all, the four columns formed a total army of about 20,000 men. It was, however, differently composed than the army of Khalid bin Walid and Al-Muthanna that invaded Iraq a year before. It comprised mostly the northern Arab tribes and had a large number of the citizens of Medina and Mecca, of whom one thousand were the Companions of the Prophet. As compared to it, the Iraqi army consisted mostly of the Bedouin tribes, who fought under their tribal chiefs. The Syrian armies fought under the commanders chosen by the Caliph and were organised in columns regardless of tribal affinities.

Caliphal Instructions : As it was his wont, the Caliph accompanied each departing column to Jurf, a place some distance from Medina, and gave instructions to the Commanders and men about the conduct of war. "*O people* !" he said, "*I have ten orders to give you, which you must observe loyally. Deceive none and steal from none. Betary none and disfigure no person killed on the battlefield. Do not kill any child, woman or aged man. Do not bark or burn the date palms; nor cut down fruit trees nor destroy crops: Do not slaughter cattle, flocks or camels except for food. Do not kill monks and hermits who you will come across is Syria.*" The commanders were in addition instructed to establish good government and firm administration in conquered territories, to protect the vanquished, to respect envoys, and to be watchful and alert by night and day.

Initial successes of the invading Muslims : At first all went well with the invaiding Muslim columns. Yezid bin Sufyan was the first to encounter a Greek force under Sergius, when he advanced through the Wadi Araba, to the south of the Dead Sea. He routed the Greek force and forced it to retreat to Gaza. In the meanwhile, Amr ibn al-As also advanced from Ayla towards Palestine. Both Amr and Yezid advanced on to the Mediterranean coast where they captured Gaza. But then both retired to the east of the Dead Sea, for news were received of a great Byzantine army being assembled by the Emperor Heraclius. The Emperor was then at Emessa (Hims) in northern Syria. On receiving news of Arab invading armies, he collected a large force and sent it against the Arabs under the command of his brother, Theodorus. This army slowly moved south. Its advance, however, put the Arab commanders in a critical situation. They combined their forces and awaited further reinforcements from the Caliph.

Khalid bin Walid marches on Syria : The critical situation of the Muslim armies in Syria made the Caliph to take a prompt action. He ordered Khalid bin Walid in Hira to go to the assistance of the Muslims in Syria with half of his Iraqi army, leaving al-Muthanna in control of Chaldaea with the other half. On receiving this order, Khalid took 9000 men with him, leaving the remaining 9000 men with al-Muthanna. He led his force directly across the Desert of Syria, following the route of Quraqir — Suwa — Damascus.[1] After a week's journey through the waterless desert, he joined the Muslim forces near Damascus. Other commanders accepted him openly or tacitly as the supreme commander of combined forces. Clever strategist as he was, Khalid at once realized that Muslim advance on Damascus was highly dangerous with the large Byzantine army advancing south in their rear. He, therefore, ordered the Muslims to fall sou th till they reached a place on the Dead Sea, called Ajnadayn.[2] Here the two other Muslim columns under Yezid and Amar alsojoined the main Muslim force. Thus Khalid had now nearly 40,000 men under him. In the meantime, the great Byzantine army had slowly arrived on the scene.

Two Armies Compared : The two opposing armies were different from each other in every respect. The Arab Army numbered about 40,000 men, while the Byzantine army was at least

1. We come across conflicting traditions here again. The exact route followed by Khalid is disputed by Arab and modern historians. It is also disputed whether he met the Muslim armies at Damascus or at Bosra on the Dead Sea.

2. We again come across a crop of conflicting traditions. It is disputed whether the battle of Ajnadayn was ever fought at all. Arab historians mostly regard the battle of Ajnadayn and Yermuk as one and the same. But it is unacceptable. The battle of Ajnadayn was fought in Abu Bakr's Caliphate and that the Yermuk two years after during Umar's Caliphate.

100,000 strong (and according to another tradition, 240,000 strong). Sir William Muir writes, "Whatever abatement is made from them (*i.e.* Arab traditions of 240,000 men), so much we may readily accept that the army with which Heraclius sought to stay the surging tide of Saracen invasion must needs have been very large." It was equipped with best weapons of the day and was in high morale due to its recent victories over the Persians. "In discipline and combined movement, and also equipment," writes Muir, "Byzantine must vastly have surpassed the Arab force." But the Christian army lacked unity and loyalty to its commander. It contained a large contingent of the Christian Arabs, besides Greeks, Armenians and diverse other people. Syrian Arabs had no love or attachment for their Christian masters, the Greeks, partly due to religious differences and partly due to difference of tongue and culture. Indeed, mutual quarrels and rancour disunited the Byzantine army. Moreover, the Syrian Arabs had more in common with the invading Muslims than with their Greek masters. Furthermore, the Byzantine commanders quarrelled with each other. Compared to this, the Muslim army, though weak in numbers and poor in accoutrements of war, was filled with religious enthusiasm, unity, loyalty to its commander, and vigour. The Muslim cavalry was superior to that of the Byzontine in speed and dash. Finally, the Muslims had no religious, social or cultural differences and discord to divide and weaken them. They were all inspired by one belief and filled with one aspiration—to fight in the way of Allah. If they won, they would have the fair land of Syria with all its good things of life ; but if killed, they would be rewarded with paradise. No doubt, as Muir says, "the 40,000 Muslims were stronger far than the 240,000 of the enemy."

Battle of Ajnadayn : 30 July 634. On 30th July, 634 A. D./28. V. 13 A. H., the battle began between the two forces. It was a bloody one. In the end the Arab cavalry charged so fiercely upon the Christians that their immense host was shattered and routed. The Roman losses were heavy, for many of their soldiers were chained. They were simply massacred. Theodorus, the brother of the Emperor, with the rest of his army, fled to the north. He was disgraced by the Emperor and despatched to Constantenople. Many of the fugitives took shelter within the four walls of Jerusalem — a proof that Ajnadayn was in its neighbourhood. The Emperor, then at Emessa, retired to Antioch on the Syrian coast.

The Muslim loss was 3000 killed. But the victory opened Palestine to them. Several cities upto Gaza were quickly occupied by them. Then they advanced towards Demascus, which was captured in Umar's caliphate. The tidings of the victory of Ajnadayn reached Medina when Hazrat Abu Bakr was on his death-bed.

Chapter 18

DEATH OF ABU BAKR : A REVIEW OF HIS CALIPHATE

Last Illness of Abu Bakr : August, 634/vi. 13 A. H. The Caliph was now sixty-three years of age, and still diligent and attentive to the official responsibilities. But in the beginning of August, 634, he caught fever, which continued for several days. Being unable to conduct public prayers in the Mosque, he deputed Umar in his place.

Nomination of Umar: When his illness took a serious turn and he knew his end was near, the Caliph consulted his chief advisers, the Shura, about his successor. All eyes turned towards Umar. But some, like Abdur Rehman bin Auf and Talha, complained of the severity of his temper. "He is severe," remarked Hazrat Abu Bakr, "for he thinks I am lenient. But when the responsibilities of office would fall on him, he will be softened. He is, indeed, the best amongst you." Thus assured, all accepted the Caliph's proposal. Thereupon he asked Uthman to take down his last order, appointing Umar as his successor. While dictating, he fainted. But Uthman completed the unfinished sentence. On recovering, he asked Uthman what he had written. Uthman read the whole will. The Caliph was pleased and remarked. "You apprehended that, lest I passed away, the people would have been left in doubt." Uthman declared that it was so.

Then the Caliph summoned all the people of Medina to assemble in the court of the Mosque. He addressed them from the window of his house which opened into the court. "O people ! I have appointed Umar ibn al-Khattab as my successor. He is not my relative, but he is the best among you. Are you satisfied with him? Will you obey him?" The people answered with one accord, "yes, we will obey him." The Caliph was pleased and prayed for God's favour on Umar and the Muslims.

His Death : 23rd August, 634/22. vi. 13 A. H. A few days later his end came. A day before his death al-Muthanna reached Medina with the news of the rebellion in Chaldaea and the Persian attack on Muslim possessions. The dying Caliph summoned Umar and commanded him to send reinforcements to Iraq the very next day he died. This was the last act of state of the First Caliph of Islam. Next day, on 23rd August, 634/22nd Jamadi-al Thani, 13, A. H., he breathed his last. He was, according to his dying wish, buried by the side of Holy Prophet's grave in the apartment

of Hazrat Aysha. He reigned for about two years and three months.

Character of Abu Bakr. The reign of Abu Bakr was short, but epoch-making in the history of Islam and of the Ancient East. Before we describe his achievements, let us briefly delineate his personality.

Abu Bakr, a friend of the Prophet before the Call, became one of his closest Companions ever after. In fact, he was the *alter ego* of the Prophet, his companion of the cave at the time of Emigration from Mecca, his comrade-in-arms in all the great battles of the Prophet, his chief adviser and associate in all his expeditions and policies, and his father-in-law. History afforded him an opportunity to do over again what the Prophet had accomplished before, that is re-conversion of apostate Arabia to Islam. For this supreme historic task Abu Bakr was, indeed, endowed with many a quality of head and heart. He had, firstly, an unshakable conviction in the Truth of Islam, sincerity and devotion to the Faith and its Prophet, an implacable firmness of character in face of all trials and tribulations of a revolted nation and an unruly race of desert-dwellers. In short, he possessed will-power and energy to overcome all enemies of the Islam and Islamic State.

Abu Bakr was not endowed with a remarkable bodily strength. He is described as "a man of very fair complexion, thin countenance, of slender build, and with a stoop." He was somewhat tall, but lean, with emaciated checks, deep-set eyes and a high and receding forehead. But his frail bodily frame was gifted with many qualities of mind, will and character. He was a man of great simplicity and frugality. Though, from an humble commoner, he became a ruler his elevation did not bring the slightest change in his mode of life. He wore the same simple dress, lived in the same simple house of camelskin tent, worked to earn his living in the same manner of a merchant as before. His habits were frugal, his food simple and his manner frank and unpretentious.

Abu Bakr was deeply conscientious and public-spirited. He devoted himself heart and soul to the unity, strength and stability of the State which he saved from the Apostates and rebels, to the spread of the Faith and to the well-being of the Muslims. He often went through the streets of Medina at night to help the distressed and relieve the destitute. For several months after his election, he continued to maintain himself by his personal income as a merchant. But one day Umar, who saw him going to the market-place to sell his merchandise, persuaded him to accept 250 dirhams monthly from the public treasury as a remuneration for his public duties so that he might devote all his energy and attention to State func-

tions. Later this sum was increased to 500 dirhams a month (6,000 dirhams a year). Nevertheless, he regarded his salary as a debt and asked his daughter, Ayesha, on his death-bed to sell his property and refund the money he had received from the Bayt al-Mal.

Abu Bakr was tender-hearted but firm. He would not compromise on the principles of Islam. That is why he waged a war against the rebels and the apostates, refused to accept the demand of those who sought exemption from the payment of Zakat. Yet he readily forgave them who laid down arms or surrendered at the end of fighting. He surrounded himself with no pomp and show of the sovereigns, but lived the simple, but diligent life of a tribal patriarch, and endeared himself to the people by his devotion to duty and good deeds. He combined in himself the qualities of a great leader. He was wise and sagacious, prompt in decision and action, alert to the dangers confronting the young Republic of Medina, impartial and judicious towards all. "Abu Bakr's calm judgment and quick sagacity," writes Lanepoole, "joined to a gentle and compassionate heart, were of incalculable service to the faith of Islam. Abu Bakr was endowed with a faith which moves mountains." The grand secret of his strength, as Sir William Muir writes, was faith in Mohammad. "Call me not the Caliph of the Lord," he would say, "I am but the Caliph of the Prophet of the Lord." "And so it was," concludes Muir, "that he crushed Apostasy and laid secure the foundations of Islam. His reign was short, but, after Mohammad himself, there is no one to whom the Faith is more beholden." Considered as a Muslim, a stateman and a leader, Abu Bakr was the right man in the right place and at the right time in the history of early Islam.

Achievements of Abu Bakr. We may briefly survey some of the significant achievements of the First Caliph of Islam. They are:—

1. the suppression of Apostasy, by which he saved Islam and its nascent polity.

2. He preserved the integrity of Islam and the sanctity of the traditions of the Prophet. He compelled the recalcitrant tribes to pay Zakat and thus prevented the weakening of the Islamic principles and the consequent disintegration of the Islamic State. "It was the simple faith of Abu Bakr", writes Muir, "which fitted him for task, and made him carry out the law of his Master to the letter. But for him Islam would have melted away in compromise with the Bedawin tribes, or, likelier still, have perished in the throes of birth."

3. **Collection of Quran**: On the suggestion of Umar, Abu Bakr

commissioned Zayd bin Thabit to collect the scattered recordings of the Quran and compiled them in the form of a book. It was after the battle of Yemama in which three hundred Quran-readers had died. This act of piety saved the Holy Book from being lost by the negligence or death of those who had memorised it.

4. **Government by consultation**: Following the teaching of the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet, Abu Bakr conducted the business of the State by consulting the Muslims around him, who constitated his "shura" or consultatives body. This was the simple and advisory democracy of early Islam, without any intermediaries, such as the elected representatives, between the people and the rulers. Every question or problem confronting the Caliph was discussed by him with the people around him before he made any decision or took any step regarding it. Every person had free access to the Caliph, who actually dwelt among his people from morning till night. Opinion was freely expressed before him by all present, but final decision rested with the Caliph. These facts of direct popular consultation and free public opinion are sufficient to disprove the assertion of autocracy of Abu Bakr, as many Western writers have charged him.

5. Abu Bakr devoted public money to public good and well-being. As Dr. Weil writes, "He used the treasures, which his generals sent him out of the booty, for the purposes of the State and State alone. He himself remained as poor as before and continued for sometime even as Caliph to maintain himself by trade and farming until his companions persuaded him to devote himself entirely to Government. Then alone did he decide to accept a few thousand dirhams a year and summer and winter suit." In fact, he set up such a strict standard of accounting for public money that he ordered his daughter to refund his wages to the public treasury by selling his properties.

6. **Impartial Government**. Abu Bakr established an impartial government. His choice of officers, commanders ahd governors was determined not by family considerations or tribal affinity but on merit and service to Islam and the young State of Islam. He made no discrimination between the town-dwellers and the Bedouin, between rich and poor, highborn or lowly, free or slave. The qualities which weighed with him were piety, priority in accepting Islam, service to Islam, devotion to the Republic of Islam, and the ability to do one's duty. These were the reasons why he chose Khalid ibn al-Walid to command Muslim armies against the apostates, the Persians and the Byzantines. He was wise and impartial in judging and appointing his subordinates. Umar was his judge in Medina. Ali was his secretary and Zayd bin Thabit was his compiler of the Quran.

UMAR THE GREAT

August, 634—November, 644/13-23 A. H.

CHAPTER 19

CONQUESTS OF HAZRAT UMAR

Accession of Umar : 24th Aug : 634 A. D /23rd Jamadi II. 13 A. H. One day after the death of Abu-Bakr, Umar succeeded him in the Caliphate as nominated by him. At the time of his accession, he was about fifty-one years of age. He was the son of Al-Khattab, a scion of Banu Adi, an important clan of the Quraysh, which discharged the functions of diplomacy and arbitration in pre-Islamic Mecca. Umar was a notable figure in pre-Islamic Mecca, partly because of his wealth but mainly because of his personality and tact in managing the affairs of the little mercantile state. As a young man he won a name in bodily contests and wrestling as well as in oratory at the famous fair of Ukaz. Umar was, indeed, an ardent Arab nationalist, devoted to the language, customs and social and religious beliefs and practices of pre-Islamic Arabia. These were the reasons why he at first passionately opposed the Holy Prophet. He regarded his preaching of Islam as a breach of Arabism which he so ardently championed. But when he adopted Islam, he threw himself heart and soul into the mission of making it the religion of Arabia. It was this mission which he was now called upon to carry forth to the lands of Persia and Rome in order to make Islam and Arabism global in dimensions. These were the two forces—Islam and Arabism—which inspired the conquests of Umar ibn al-Khattab. He conquered Iraq, Persia and Egypt. In this chapter, we shall deal with the conquest of Iraq.

CONQUEST OF IRAQ

Al-Muthanna and the Persians : We have said above that Hazrat Abu Bakr had ordered Khalid bin Walid to go to Syria, leaving half of the army in Hira under the command of al-Muthanna. The consequent depletion of the Muslim army in Chaldaea encouraged the Persians to launch another counter-attack to regain their lost territories. Another change was made in the Imperial court and a Prince was placed on the throne instead of Azarmidukht. He despatched a new force of 10,000 men under the Hormuz to expel the Arabs from Chaldaea. On receiving the news of Persian advance, al-Muthanna sent away women and

children from Hira and collected all his forces from the outlying garrisons. He then marched out from Hira, crossed the Euphrates and met the Persians near Babylon where Hormuz had posted himself. The battle that ensued was short but fierce. The Persians gave way before the fierce onslought of the Arabs and fled. Though victorious, al-Muthanna was yet filled with apprehensions of further Persian attacks. He found his army inadequate to meet this challenge and decided to go to Medina for more troops. But he found the Caliph on his death-bed. Abu Bakr was, however, fully alive to the peril the Muslim army faced in Chaldaea. He summoned Umar, the caliph-designate, to his death-bed and said, "Raise army for al-Muthanna. Do not delay. If I die this day, as I may, do not wait till evening, and if I die to-night, do not delay till morning. Let not sorrow for me make you to delay the despatch of the army. You know how I acted myself when the Prophet died and there could be no greater sorrow for mankind than that. If I had tarried out of grief over Prophet's death, the Faith would have fared badly." Umar, touched by the urgent words of the dying Caliph, promised to do as commanded. Al-Muthanna returned to Hira, where he awaited reinforcements.

Changes in Persia. The Imperial Court at al-Madain was again thrown into a new paroxysm of royal intrigues and murders. The king died and was succeeded by a son. However the new king was killed soon after in a rebellion. Another weak prince was placed on the throne, but all powers were now in the hands of Rustam, a powerful grandee and a former satrap of Khurasan. He infused a new spirit in the Persians. He collected a large force and despatched it in several detachments towards the troubled borders in Chaldaea under the command of Nusra, Jaban and Bahman. While these forces were advancing towards Chaldaea, Rustam sent his secret emissaries to the Dihqans or Persian landlords and officials in Chaldaea inciting them to throw off their allegiance to the Arab invaders. The people of Chaldaea and Hira still believed that Arab occupation was temporary and that mighty Persia would yet drive out the invaders. They revolted against the Arabs, whose forces were depleted by Khalid's departure. Finding it difficult to hold the revolted province, al-Muthnnna left Hira and retreated upto the verge of the Arabian desert, there to await reinforcements from Medina.

Abu Ubayd sent against the Persians : According to the last wish of Abu Bakr, Umar ascended the pulpit in the Mosque on the day after his death and called upon the people to volunteer for the war against the Persians. But the response was poor. The Arabs were still very apprehensive of the Persian might. Al-Muthanna who was still in Medina, also harangued the people for a war against Persia where, as he said, there was untold treasures

and riches to capture. He said that the Persians were not so strong as they appeared and that the Arabs had already inflicted many defeats upon them. At last people began to volunteer for war. The first to come forward was Abu Ubayd al-Thaqifi, a citizen of Taif. The Caliph appointed him as the commander of the force, "because he was first to offer," as Umar said, "and in eagerness to fight is the Arab's glory." Neverthless, the Caliph advised him to consult the companions in the conduct of the affairs.

Battle of Namaraq : Oct., 634 : Abu Ubayd marched slowly towards the Persian border, where he joined with al-Mathanna, who readily placed himself under his command. The combined forces of Abu Ubayd and al-Muthanna now advanced against the Persian army under Jaban who had captured Hira. A battle was fought at Namaraq, a place ten miles from Hira. The Persians were defeated and put to flight.

Battle of Kaskar : Oct., 634 : Then Abu Ubayd crossed the Euphrates and marched against another Persian army under Nursa, who was at Kaskar, a royal date-grove near Babylon. He too was defeated and the royal date-gardens were captured by the Arabs.

Battle of the Bridge : Oct., 634/VIII 13 A. H. Infuriated by successive defeats, the Persian supreme commander, sent a still larger army under Bahman against the Arabs. This army included an array of elephants and carried the Imperial banner of panther's skin the Darafsh-i-Kaviyani—a symbol of Persia's might and triumph. Before this great force, the Arabs fell back and recrossed the Euphrates. On reaching the eastern bank of the Euphrates, Bahman challanged Abu Ubayd either to cross over to the Persian side or allow him to cross over to his side. Touched to the quick, Abu Ubayd responded by crossing the river onto the Persian side, although his advisers warned him against doing so. The Arabs found the other side narrow, hemmed in between the Persian army in front and the river behind them, with the Persian elephants standing before them like a wall. Though Abu Ubayd had ten thousond men under him, he could not manoeuvre his forces properly. The Arab horses were frightened by the huge war-elephants, thus compelling Abu Ubayed and his men to get down and fight the elephants on foot. In spite of Arab's bravery and reckless heroism, the elephants could not be repulsed by them. In an encounter with the biggest elephant, Abu Ubayed was trampled underfoot and killed. One after the other the commanders who succeeded Abu-Ubayd, were also killed. At this critical juncture, an Arab soldier cut the ropes of the bridge of boats. Pressed hard, the Arabs retreated towards the bridge, but they found it gone. The retreat then became a rout. Many of

them were drowned in the river when they jumped into it to swim over to the other side. At this, al-Muthanna took the command. He held the Persians at bay, while the bridge was again repaired. Then the remaining Arab army, hardly 3000 men out of 10,000, crossed the river. Had Bahman also crossed the river after them, the Arabs would have fared ill at his hands. But Bahman was hastily summoned to al-Madain where another court revolution had removed the Queen, Azarmi-dukht. Thus was fought the Battle of the Bridge, the greatest defeat of the Arabs at the hands of the Persians.

Battle of Buwayb : Nov., 634 A. D. Al-Muthanna, though severely wounded, kept up a heroic resistance against the Persians. He defeated a Persian force under Mahran in a battle at Buwayb, near Hira. The Persians committed the blunder of crossing the Euphrates on to the Arab side and were completely defeated. Mahran himself was slain and his army fled across the river.

Umar resolves to conquer Iraq ; Hazrat Umar received the news of the disastrous defeat in the battle of the Bridge with great equanimity and calmness. He did not reproach those Muslims who had fled from the battle-field. The ebb and tide of the Arab advance in Chaldaea convinced him that they could not securely hold this province so long as the Persians held the regions beyond the Euphrates, and the Persian court existed at al-Madain. It was strategically impossible to hold Chaldaea with Upper Iraq still in Persian hands. Hence the subjugation of the whole of Iraq upto the mountains that separated it from Persia proper was imperative. Umar now set himself the supreme task of crushing Persian power in Iraq and wage a war between the old Persia and the new Arabia of Islam. This opened the first phase in the final conquest of the Sassanid Empire. He proclaimed a holy war against Persia and summoned the Arabian tribes to rally under his banner in Medina. While he addressed the people in Medina, he wrote letters to the Arabian chiefs or sent envoys to them, to send volunteers for the war against Persia. He made it a national war of the Arabs against the Persians and called upon all the Arab tribes, Christian or Muslim, loyal or reclaimed apostates, to join this great national struggle against their ancient enemy. "I swear by the Lord," said the Caliph, " that I will smite down the proud princes of Presia with the sword of the princes of Arabia." His call was responded. Levy after levy of Arab tribes poured into Medina, till at last 20,000 men had assembled. At first the Caliph intended to lead this army himself. With this view, he led the force outside Medina. But the Companions persuaded him to appoint someone else in command and himself remain in Medina. The death of the Caliph, they said, on the battlefield would be ruinous for Islam, whereas an ordinary

commander could be replaced by another in case of defeat or death. The Caliph accepted this advice and after some enquiry appointed Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas as the commander of the new army. He sent him towards the Persian border after giving him instructions regarding the conduct of war.

Yazdjard III, the Last of the Sassanids : Dec. 634 A. D. Another court revolution occurred at al-Madain. The Persian courtiers, grandees and nobles chafed at the disastrous defeat of Buwayb. They removed the feeble Queen from the throne in order to find a new king to lead the war against the Arabs. At last a descendant of the Chosroes, a youth of twenty-one years, named Yazdjard was discovered. He had escaped the massacre of Siroes, for his mother had taken him away from al-Madain, while yet a little child. He was brought from Persia and placed on the throne. The young King soon infused a new spirit and roused his nobles to a patriotic war against the Arab invaders. Again the Persian landlords and nobles in Chaldaea revolted against the Arabs, who were forced to fall back on the desert. Cities in Chaldaea upto Hira again passed into Persian hands and were garrisoned by fresh Persian troops.

Death of al-Muthanna: the Strategy of the Desert: Al-Muthanna again fell back upon the desert, where he had to await the new army marching from Medina. But he did not live long. He died of the wounds he had received in the Battle of the Bridge in April, 635 A.D. Before his death, however, he wrote a letter to Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas in which he advised him not to cross the river but to remain on the Arab side of the river. It must be the Arab strategy, as he wrote, to remain at the edge of the desert. so that in case of defeat to fall back upon the desert where the Persians could not pursue them, and, if victorious, to crush the Persian power before crossing the river onto the Persian soil. Such was the grand strategy of this great general of early Islam. which was also the strategy of Khalid bin Walid and of Hazrat Umar in their wars against Persia and the Byzantium. It illustrates the role of the desert in the conquests of early Islam.

Sa'd marches to Qadisiya: Sa'd bin abi Waqqas left Medina at the head of 4,000 men. As new levies arrived in Medina from the South, the Baliph despatched them also to him. Thus at last he had 20,000 men under him when he reached the Persian border near the Great Canal of Sapor, on the verge of the desert at a place called Qadisiya. Al-Muthanna had died, but Sa'd who had received his last letter followed his advice, also supported by the Caliph. He kept his army within the confines of the desert and did not enter the cultivated land around the river Euphrates. He posted himself at Qadisiya, a little fortress, near the western bank

of the Euphrates. There he awaited the Persians, advancing towards the river under their supreme commander, Rustam. The army of Sa'd, now numbering 30,000 men, included contingents from all the important tribes of Arabia, like the Hawazin, Kinda, etc. It also included several chiefs who had fought against the Muslims in the wars of Apostasy, for now the ban against the former apostates was lifted. They included such men as Tulayha, the qoundam false prophet of Najd, now a contrite Muslim, Amr ibn Ma'dikerib, the rebel chief of Yemen and al-Ashath, the rebel chief of Hadramawt, the last came at the head of their tribal detachments. The army also included poets, orators, etc. In short, Umar "left not a single person of note or dignity in the land whether warrior, poet, orator, or chieftain, nor any man possessed of horse or weapons, but he sent him off to al-Iraq." It also included 1400 Companions of the Prophet, of whom 99 had fought at Badr. As usual, the tribes brought their women and children with them, for they intended to settle in the conquered lands. In fact, it was a tribal migration on a mass scale and not merely an army on the march. Hazrat Umar had, indeed, roused Arabia for a war against Persia. The Caliph himself supervised the operations from Medina and sent a messenger daily to the commander, instructing him in the selection of the site and in the conduct of the battle. He had instructed Sa'd to encamp at Qadisiya, where he was to draw up his army in battle-order, with the desert behind and river in front of him. The army was protected on its right flank by an impassable swamp and on the left by the Canal of Sapor and the lake of Najaf. The time was the summer of 635 A.D./Ramazan 14 A.H.*

Rustam marches to Qadisiya: Yazdjard, the youthful king of Persia, raised a large force of 120,000 men. It included 300 war-elephants and was equipped with all the weapons of war. The king put it under the command of Rustam. This huge army marched leisurely towards the border. Rustam first reached Hira and then came down along the eastern bank of the Euphrates opposite Qadisiya. A bridge of boats stretched over the river. But Rustam lingered for several weeks on the opposite bank. During this

* The exact date of the battle of Qadisiya is a matter of dispute. Muir fixes it in November, 635 A.D./ix. 14 A.H. Syed Ameer Ali fixes it in Muharram 15 A.H., corresponding to February-March, 636 A.D. Recent European authors like Becker and Hitti, put it in the last days of May or first of June, 637 A.D. The last mentioned date would properly explain the arrival of the Syrian reinforcement on the second day of the battle, for the victory of the Muslims in the battle of Yermuk on August 20, 636 A.D., enabled the Caliph to transfer a part of the Syrian army to Iraq, where the fateful struggle against the Persians was then impending. It would also explain the heat and sand-storm on the last day of the battle, it being mid-summer. The heat and the stormy winds played a great role in the victory of the Arabs, accustomed as they were to desert environment, which the Persians were not. But this date does not tally with the other events and dates of the subsequent history.

interval, a series of negotiations opened between the Persians and the Arabs. Under the instructions of the Caliph, Sa'd sent a body of twenty envoys to the King at al-Madain with the offer to accept Islam, or pay tribute, otherwise sword would decide between him and the invaders. Yazdjard, though angry with the rude and frank demeanour of the Arabs, only rebuked them for their poverty and presumption and dismissed them with a clod of Persian soil to satisfy their hunger for land. The rude sons of the desert bore the clod to Sa'd and, placing it before him, exclaimed, "It is an augury of the triumph to come."

In the meanwhile, news reached Madain of the Arab parties raiding and plundering castles and villages between the Euphrates and the Capital,. The Persian landlords and peasants urged the King either to fight and drive away the invaders or they would go over to their side. Upon this the King ordered Rustam to delay fighting no longer as he intended to do. In fact, Rustam's plan was to delay fighting so long that the Arabs would either tire out and disperse home or run short of supplies. Urged by his master, he reluctantly moved upto the bank of the river. Several days of parley began during which the Arabs again offered Islam, Jizya or the sword. At last Rustam asked the Arabs either to cross over or suffer him to cross on to their side. Sa'd consented to the Persians crossing over to his side.

The Two Armies: As the bridge of boats was guarded by the Arab cavalry, Rustam devised a new plan to cross the river. He ordered his men to construct a dam across the river during the darkness of night. When the day dawned, a causeway was ready, across which the huge Persian horde poured over to the other side. The small Arab detachment fell back before it and joined the main army a couple of miles behind on the little plain of Qadisiya. Rustam pitched his royal pavilion on the west bank of the river, where he sat on his throne under a canopy of gold. In front of him were arrayed his foot-soldiers in a great line, thirteen deep, with the war-elephants at the centre. But, in spite of their great numbers and strong weapons, the hearts of the Persians were filled with bad omens and superstitious fears. When a decadent people lack courage and strategy, they endeavour to fortify themselves by astrology or by ridiculing the young but ill-equipped enemy. "And when the two armies met," writes al-Fakhri, a Muslim historian of the fourteenth century A.D., "the Persians were laughing at the spears of the Arabs, which they compared to spindles." He further writes that they ridiculed Arab swords as worn out. To this the Arabs replied spiritedly and truly, that their swords were "worn of sheath, but keen of blade."

When Rustam had crossed the river and arrayed his army in

battle-order, Sa'd also marshalled his troops. The Muslim army was divided into columns, each consisting of a particular tribe or clan, headed by its chief. Each column was further divided into companies of ten, commanded by selected leaders. Chief commands were given to the veterans who had fought under the banner of the Prophet. The columns were arranged in a line in front of the fortress, with a party of poets and orators at the head of each column. In front of the line stood the Arab cavalry. Before the battle began, the poets and orators harangued their troops by reciting the verses of the Quran and by recounting the victories of Islam and of their tribes, especially of the battle of Badr. Thus by their fiery and stirring declamations they made the hearts of the troops filled with enthusiasm and confidence in victory.

Sa'd, the supreme commander, who was ailing, had posted himself at the ramparts of the old fortress, from where he issued his commands to the generals below. The Arab soldiers who were accustomed to see their commanders fighting at their head, murmured at this safe but unbecoming way of leading the battle. They began lampooning their commander. He, however, came down, showed them his ailment, and convinced them of his inability. Having again placed himself atop the fortress, he instructed his soldiers to begin fighting when he would raise the cry of *Allahu Akbar* four times. At the first shout they were to fall in line. At second and third shouts they were to take hold of their weapons and make their horses ready. At the fourth shout they were to rush in one body at the enemy with the cry of "Our help is from the Lord."

Battle of Qadisiya : Oct., 635/ix. 14 A. H. The battle, however, began differently. When Sa'd raised the first shout of *Allahu Akbar*, the enemy advanced and fighting began. Unlike most battles in ancient times, the battle of Qadisiya lasted for three days and the fourth night. The first day, known as *Yaum al-Armath*, or the *Day of Confusion*, was the day of single combats, great feats of valour and individual bravery, but ended in confusion and indecision. Prodigies of courage and daring were performed by Amr ibn Ma'dikerib and others, who captured Hormuz, one of the Persian commanders. The Persian elephants, however, played havoc among the Arab ranks. They caused many casualties among several tribes, especially Bani Bajila and Asad, and spread consternation and confusion all around. It was with difficulty that the Arab archers and skirmishers put them to flight and recovered lost ground. The night fell amid confusion and dispondency in Arab ranks.

Fighting was renewed the second day. It is known as *Yaum-al-Aghwath*, or the *Day of Succour*, for at mid-day the Syrian reinforcement under al-Qaqa, arrived on the battle scene to the

great joy of their compatriots. Al-Qaqa at once challenged Behman, "the victor of the battle of the Bridge" to a single combat and killed him. Then several other Persian heroes were also killed, which sent a wave of despondency through the Persian line, while the spirits of the Arabs rose. The day ended without any conclusion.

The third day, known as *Yaum al-Imas* or the *Day of Distress* began with the mournful task of removing the dead and burying them. The Muslims completed the task, but the Persians could not. The losses on Persian side were heavier. The sight of their dead depressed the Persians in the fighting that re-commenced at about mid-day. Their forward line of elephants, which had returned after the lapse of a day, presented a great obstacle to the Arabs. At last Sa'd commissioned al-Qaqa with the task of driving away the elephants by attacking at their eyes and trunks, their weak points. Al-Qaqa, with a party of intrepid warriors, attacked the elephants accordingly and after a fearful struggle drove away the huge animals. They fled across the river, trampling many of the Persians underfoot in their flight. For the moment the two armies stopped fighting as they gazed at the horrifying spectacle of three hundred elephants in their mad rush across the river. But the battle resumed with redoubled fury soon after. When the day set, it was still raging furiously with the issue still in doubt.

The night of Clangour : The night fell, but fighting went on, for the combatants were furiously entangled in a mortal struggle. At nightfall, al-Qaqa gathered some soldiers and rushed upon the enemy. A fierce struggle went on throughout the night, which rang with the clangour of the weapons and the neighing of the horses. Hence it came to be known as the *Night of Clangour* or *Laylat-al Harir*. When the sun rose the fourth morning, it still found the two enemies in a mortal combat, but wearied by thirty hours of non-stop fighting. Then al-Qaqa, collecting a party of daring soldiers, rushed upon the centre of the Persian horde and rent it asunder. The royal pavilion, where the Persian Commander-in-Chief sat on his thorne, was exposed to the Arab warriors. At this critical juncture, the day being stormy, the wind veered round and upturned the canopy over Rustam's thorne. Seeing Arab soldiers rushing upon him, Rustam fled from his throne towards the river behind. But an Arab, named Hilab bin Alqama, caught him and cut his head off. He then ran up the vacant thorne, from where he shouted the death of Rustam. It sent a wave of despair and despondency through the Persian army. On hearing of the death of their supreme commandar, the Persians broke up their lines and fled towards the river. But they found the dam breached and turned round only to be cut to pieces by

the victorious Arabs rushing upon them. The whole day long the Persian fugitives were pursued and killed in large numbers. Thus ended the battle of Qadisiya in utter discomfiture of the Persian horde.

Losses : Qadisiya is one of the decisive battles in the history of Islam as well as of the world. It literally broke the back of the ancient empire of Persia. The Muslim losses were great, but the Persian army was decimated. On the first two days the Muslim lost 2500 dead, and on the last day and night 6000 of Arab army lay dead, a total of 8500 in all. But the Persian casualties were four times the Muslim number, including their Commander-in-Chief and several other commanders and warriors of note.

An immense booty fell into the hands of the Muslims, which brought to each soldier a share of six thousand pieces, besides the special gifts for the veterans. The jewels striped from Rustam's body were worth 70,000 pieces. Above all the great banner of the Sassanid Empire, made of panther's skin, was captured. It was studded with gems, the value of which was 100,000 pieces.

Consequences : But the consequences of the battle of Qadisiya were too great to be assessed in terms of the number of dead or the vast amount of the booty captured. The defeat of Rustam's army really signalised the beginning of the end of the Persian Empire. The battle of Qadisiya was turning-point in the history of Persia, Arabia and Islam. It put to an end the Sassanid Empire and laid the foundations of the Islamic Empire of the Middle Ages. In fact, the ancient age in Asia's history ended and its Middle Ages dawned on the battlefied of Qadisiya. The huge army which Rustam had mustered was utterly broken and routed. The military might of proud Persia was shattered. The king was never able to gather such a large and formidable force ever after. His people lost confidence in his empire. The Arab nomadic tribes in Iraq hesitated no longer in their allegiance. They threw in their lot with the invaders against their Persian masters. Even in Arabia the former rebels and apostates rallied eagerly under the banner of the Caliph. The scales of war now definitely turned against the Sassanids.

The immediate consequence of the Arab victory at Qadisiya was their rapid advance towards al-Madain, the Capital of the Sassanid Empire. Hira and Chaldaea, which were three times captured and lost by the Arabs now easily fell into their hands. The road to al-Madain now lay open. Without capturing it, as Hazrat Umar knew so well, no permanent hold on Chaldaea or Lower-Iraq, was possible. However, he soon found that without conquering Upper Iraq beyond al-Madain even Lower-Iraq could

not be permanently subdued. Thus the victory at Qadisiya led immediately to the conquest of the whole Iraq from the Persian Gulf in the south to Mosul in the north.

Hazrat Umar used to await anxiously the news from the battlefield of Qadisiya. Every day after morning prayers he used to go out from Medina along the road to Najd to see if any messenger had come from Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas. One day he observed a camel-rider coming fast towards Medina. On enquiring he shouted from his camel of the good tidings of Muslim victory at Qadisiya. But, not recognising the Caliph, he drove on his camel towards the Mosque, with the Caliph on his heels enquiring more details of the victory. When they entered the City and the people heard of victory, they began to congratulate the Caliph. Then the messenger recognised the Caliph. He jumped down, gave the letter of Sa'd to the Caliph and side, "O, Commandar of the Faithful why did you not tell me ?" Umar remarked simply that it was all right. Such were the simple and unpretending ways of the second Caliph of Islam. Umar was, however, fully alive to the far-reaching implications of his victory. He soon wrote to Sa'd to resume advance towards al-Madain after resting his weary army for some time in Qadisiya.

Sa'd advances on al-Madain : After resting for about two months, Sa'd, who had now recovered from his illness, resumed advance. He first marched on Hira, which submitted without fighting. This city was thus taken three times by the Muslims. This time its tribute was doubled by way of punishing its past defecti ns. Sa'd then crossed the Euphrates and marched on Babylon where the remnants of Rustam's army had rallied under Harmuzan, Firuzan and Mehran, the Persian commanders. Sa'd inflicted a defeat upon them near the Tower of Babylon, and dispersed them. Mehran fled to al-Madain, Harmuzan to his government-seat at Ahwaz, and Firuzan to Nihawand, in western Persia. Sa'd now sent his troops over the whole Delta, which was reoccupied by them from the Euphrates to the Tigris. The Persian "*dihqans*" or landlords and officials submitted to the Muslims either as converts or as tributaries The Caliph had instructed Sa'd to leave those Persians in possession of their ancestral lands who submitted to the Arabs, but confiscate the land of those who had fled away. In fact, the Aramaic peasanty of Iraq welcomed the Arabs as their fellow-Arab deliverers. After completing these arrangements, Sa'd resumed his advance on al-Madain at about the middle of 637 A. D.

Fall of Al-Madain ; When Sa'd advanced upon al-Madain, the Queen-Mother led an army to stop him long before the Sassanid capital. But she was utterly discomfited and Sa'd

approached the Capital.

Al-Madain, the ancient capital of Sassanids was so called by the Arabs because it consisted of "two cities". One of them, situated on the western bank of the Tigris, was called Seleucia (founded by the Seleucid emperors, who descended from Seleucus Nikotor, a general of Alexander the Great) and the other city situated on the eastern bank of the Tigris, was called Ctesiphon, founded later by the Parthians. The Sassanid Kings made the eastern half of al-Madain—*i. e.* Ctesiphon—the seat of their Government. There they had built the wonderful palaces, including the famous *Iwan-e-Kisra*, the White Palace of Chosroes, topped by the *Taq-e-Kisra*, the marble audience hall of the Chosroes. There were also innumerable mansions and gardens of the Persian nobles and grandees in the city, filled with all the luxuries, sumptuous furnishings and arts, riches and treasures, accumulated over several centuries of Sassanid conquests, prosperity and plunder. Such was this fabulous "dual city" of riches and luxuries towards which Sa'd's army advanced, now numbering 50,000 men. Before its approach the King Yazdjard III, transferred all the offices and treasures from the western half to the eastern half, where his palaces stood.

On reaching al-Madain, Sa'd found his advance checked by the Tigris. However, he laid seige to the western city. He mounted seige weapons, but they made little effect on its strong ramparts. However Sa'd did not sit idle before the walls of Seleucia. He sent detachments in various directions. They captured all the territories west of the Tigris upto Tekrit in the north and brought large multitudes of Persian prisoners who were set free by the orders of the Caliph. Thus all the lands between the Tigris and Hira were subdued by the Arabs. In the meantime, Yazdjard sent a messenger to Sa'd with the offer of peace if the Arab would content themselves with the western half of al-Madain, leaving him the eastern half and all the lands east of the Tigris. Sa'd rejected this offer. Soon after, Sa'd ordered an assult on the western half of the "dual city" and captured it. The Persians had, indeed, withdrawn from it and crossed over to the eastern side, taking all their treasures with them. They also removed all the boats from the western banks of the river, so as to deprive the invaders of all means of crossing the river. Sa'd army entered Seleucia, but found it a deserted city, with not a soul to be seen in it. But across the river they saw another city, still defiant and secure.

For some time the Arabs could do nothing but to eye the Persian defenders of al-Madain across the Tigris, which was notorious for its depth and speed. At that particular time it was also in high tide, owing to spring floods. In spite of these natural defences, Yazdjard lost heart. He sent his royal treasures, family

and regalia to Hulwan, a fortress on the fringe of the Zagros mountains, nearly a hundred miles to the north of al-Madain. He planned to flee there himself. Sa'd was told by a Persian that the King intended to take away all the riches and treasures from the doomed capital. He urged the Arab commander to capture the city before the King had carried out his plans. Thereupon Sa'd addressed his soldiers and called for volunteers who would swim across the river and storm the city. Asim with six hundred horsemen responded to his call. He and his men jumped with their horses into the fast-moving current of the river and swam over to the other side. The Persians, who were witnessing it from the other bank, also sent a force into the river. A brief skirmish took place in the middle of the river. But the Arabs drove back the Persians and landed on the opposite bank in detachments after detachments of horsemen. Seeing the opposite bank in Arab hands, the whole army of Sa'd jumped and swam across the river. The Persians were panic-stricken. Shouting "Genii have come ! Genii have come !", they fled from the city, with their King, court and nobles at the head of the fleeing crowds. When the Arabs entered the city, they found it undefended but full of untold wealth.

Spoils of al-Madain : Immense booty was captured, including vessels of gold and silver, stores of precious stones, gorgeous costumes and luxurious furniture. Accidently, the Arabs captured a train of mules laden with the robes, girdles and tiara of the Sassanids. Among the prizes, the things which amused the Arabs most were a full-sized camel of silver, with rider of gold and a golden horse with teeth of emeralds and trapperigs of gold. Gold was so abundant that it became cheaper than silver. Besides this, there were work of art, and hordes of camphor, amber, musk and spices. The booty included also innumerable captive men and women, many of noble birth. Above all there was the royal banqueting carpet, 140 by 120 feet which pictured a garden with the trees, flowers and fruits of sparkling diamonds, rubies and other precious stones. It was sent to Medina along with the royal fifth of the State and was divided and distributed among the Muslims on the suggestion of Hazrat Ali. The part which fell to Ali's lot, fetched 20,000 dirhams. In all the Arabs captured a booty worth nine billion dirhams. The share of each soldiers came to 12,000 dirhams and there were 60,000 soldiers in Sa'd's army.

Many intereseing but instructive stories of the simple ways of the Arab conquerors of al-Madain are recorded by Muslim historians. The Arabs found bags of camphor in the city, and, believing it to be salt, put it in their food. An Arab of the desert got a large ruby. He knew not its worth and sold it for the paltry sum of one thousand dirhams. When his friends reproached him

for selling it so cheap, he replied innocently, "But I do not think that there is any number greater than ten hundreds." Another Arab stood up with a lump of gold in hands amongst his comrades and shouted, "who will exchange with me this yellow thing with his white thing," believing that silver was better than gold.

Sa'd makes al-Madain his Headquarters : On the fall of al-Madain, Sa'd went straight to the White Palace of the Chosroes, where he first performed the *Salat-uz-Zafar*, the Prayers of Victory, in humble thanks-givings to God in the White Hall. When he saw the splendid palaces and gardens of the Chosroes, he involuntarily recited the prophetic verses of the Quran : "*How many gardens and fountains did they leave behind, and crops and magnificient mansions and luxuries in which they lived ; and thus we made another people to inherit all*". (Sura 45 : Verse 25-28).

Sa'd made al-Madain the seat of the Government of Islamic Iraq. He established himself in the White Palace where the offices were set up and public prayers were conducted, The Friday service was celebrated in the White Hall of the royal palace. The army was also stationed in the "dual city", where the palaces, mansions and gardens of the Persian princes and nobles were allotted to the victors. Thus Sa'd, who already bore the title of "the first to draw blood in Islam", also earned the proud title of the Victor of al-Qadisiya and al-Madain.

Battle of Jalula : The fugitive King of Persia had taken refuge in Hulwan. But he resolved to try arms with Arabs again. He ordered his troops to hold Jalula, a fortress on the caravan-road between Al-Madain and Persian east. Being apprised of this hostile concentration, Umar instructed Sa'd to send a force against it. Twelve thousand troops, under the command of Hashim bin Utba and al-Qaqa, marched on Jalula and laid seige to it. They captured it after about three months of seige, during which great feats of valour were performed as on the battle-field of Qadisiya. After this victory, al-Qaqa marched on Hulwan and captured it also. The Arab advance now reached the foothills of the Zagros mountains which separate Iraq from Persia, a natural boundary between the two countries. Yazdjard again fled from Hulwan to ar-Ray in North Persia.

Tears of Umar : The Muslims again captured huge booty at Jalula and Hulwan. It is said that when the royal fifth reached Medina, Hazrat Umar was reduced to tears on seeing this immense wealth of the Persians. "What ails thee, O Commander of the Faithful", asked Abdur Rahman bin Auf, "that you weep on seeing this huge store of rubies, emerald, gold and silver. It is a time of joy and thankfulness, not of sorrow!" "No," replied the great

Caliph," "I do not weep over these riches, but over the thoughts that these immense riches and luxuries which God has bestowed on us will become a source of worldliness and greed among the Muslims and in the end a calamity to my people." Umar though not a Prophet, was prophetic in his forebodings. Only a couple of centuries after, the children of these conquering Arabs would degenerate and vanish from the pages of history, leaving their magnificent mansions and palaces for "another people to inherit all."

(Quran 45 : 28).

Battle of Tekrit : In the meanwhile, a danger rose in the north of al-Madain. The Persians, Romans and Christian Arab tribes in Upper Iraq combined their forces to resist the Muslims. Sa'd despatched an army against them. It laid seige to Tekrit, an important fortress on the Tigris, nearly 120 miles to the north of al-Madain. The fort was garrisoned by the Christian Bedouins, Romans and Persians resolved to flee. So the Christian Arabs entered into an alliance with the Muslim Arabs and both fell upon the Persians and Romans and put them to the sword. Then the old and new Muslims marched on Mosul and captured it. Thus the whole of Mesopotamia came into Muslim hands, and the Persians were driven beyond the mountains into their ancient country. Iraq was conquered.

Capture of Ubulla ; 635 A.D. At the time of Sa'd's victory at Qadisiya, the Caliph despatched another Army under Utba bin Ghazwan, one of the Companions, towards Ubulla at the head of the Persian Gulf. Ubulla was the headquarter of the Persian satrap of Chaldaea, and was already once captured by the Arabs under al-Muthanna. The Caliph had noticed that to hold Iraq it would be necessary to occupy the head of the Persian Gulf upto the mountainous range on the eastern side. So Utba marched on Ubulla and captured it after driving out the Persians and Indian merchants from this sea-port. The Persians rallied on the eastern banks of the Tigris, but were defeated. Utba then reduced the land as far as the mountain range separating South Iraq from Khuzistan, the southern province of Persia. He became the Governor of Ubulla. Some three years later he conducted operations against the Persians in Khuzistan, which opened a new stage in further advance of the Arabs. In the meanwhile, Ubulla lost its importance to the new capital, called Basra.

Umar places a ban on further conquest : The Arabs had at last reduced whole of Iraq from Mosul in the north to Ubulla in the south. Their commanders, however, were of the opinion that they should pursue the fleeing Persians across the mountains upto Khurasan. So, when Sa'ad despatched *Z*iyad bin Sumaya, a youth of great address and promise, with the royal fifth of spoils of Jalula

and Hulwan. he also instructed him to request the Caliph for leave to invade Persia proper. But the Caliph was not giddy with victories. He was anxious to consolidate the territories already conquered. Being apprehensive of the Arab advance beyond the mountains, he refused the request. "I want," he replied, "that between Iraq and the countries beyond an insurmountable mountain shall be a barrier, so that neither the Persians nor we shall be able to attack the other. The plain of al-Iraq is sufficient for us. I prefer the safety of my people than thousands of spoils and further conquest." This fact amply shows that the conquests of early Islam were not prompted by imperialistic land-hunger or by fanatical proselytism by the sword. Sir William Muir writes, "The equal mind of Umar, far from being unsteadied by the flush and giddiness of victory, cared first to consolidate and secure the prize already in his hands."

Foundation of Kufa and Basra: Indeed, the thoughts of the Caliph were already turning from conquest to consolidation and administration of Iraq. After the fall of al-Madain, Sa'd had made it the seat of government of the conquered province. But the humid climate of the riverine Medain did not suit the Arab soldiers, accustomed as they were to the dry climate of the desert. Some months after the capture of Madain, a party of Arab soldiers from Madain visited Medina. The Caliph was perturbed to see their pale and unwholesome look and enquired the reason thereof. Being told that it was because of the humid climate of al-Madain which did not suit the Arab temperament, the Caliph wrote to Sa'd to search for a suitable site for the new capital. "Make for the Muslims," he wrote to Sa'd, "a place of refuge and a city wherein they may dwell, and set not a river between me and them."

After a search, a site in the plain of Kufa, near Hira, was discovered. It possessed the advantages of the dry air of the desert, proximity to Arabia and, being on the verge of the Arabian desert. It could be easily abandoned in case of attack and the garrison could withdraw into the desert. Moreover, as the Euphrates was to its east, it had also the advantage that no river lay between it and Medina.

At first the troops were garrisoned in Kufa, the new capital, in barracks made of reeds, found abundantly in the lakes and swamps in the lower reaches of the Euphrates and its canals. But the reed-huts caught fire on several occasions. So the people requested the Caliph to permit them to construct houses of bricks. The Caliph, who loved simple living above all things, replied that though the flitting camp suited a nation of warriors, yet if they must have a permanent abode, they might construct one. Yet he instructed that no one should possess more than three houses for himself and his wives and children and no house should have a second storey.

So a new city of houses of dried bricks was rebuilt on a regular plan. Quarters for separate tribes were laid with an open square, a market place and a mosque in the middle of them each, while straight streets linked the different quarters to each other. In the centre of the city was constructed the Friday Mosque, the first of its kind outside Arabia. Besides the Mosque stood the *Dar-al-Imarah*, the Governor's House, with an open square in front of it and a market-place. Sa'd, its first occupant, put a gateway in front of his "palace" as it came to be known. The Caliph was reported that Sa'd had erected the gateway in order to keep the populace away from him. The Caliph at once sent a man, commissioned to pull down this undemocratic construction. Sa'd obeyed the order and the gateway which shutted the people from the Governor was demolished. However, he wrote to the Caliph that his purpose in building it was not to prevent the access to the people but to prevent intrusion from the market-place nearby. The Caliph accepted the excuse, but the gateway was not re-constrncted.

At about the same time, Basra was founded at the estuary of the Shatt-al-Arab, the combined mouth of the Euphrates and the Tigris, at the head of the Persian Gulf. Ubulla, the seat of the Sassanid Governor of Chaldaea, now occupied by Utba, was found as inhospitable a place for the Arabs as al-Madain. The troops were, therefore, shifted to the west of Ubulla, across the river, on the verge of the Arabian desert. In this new site, which was both fertile and dry, the new city arose, called Basra. At first, it too was constructed of reed-huts, which were soon replaced by the brick-houses, built like Kufa, on the same plan of tribal quarters, central mosque, the Governor's House and straight streets and market places.

Beginning of Systematic Conquest: The immediate effect of the foundation of Kufa and Basra was felt on the further conquests and expansion of Islam. Indeed, their foundation signified a change in Umar's policy of conquest and expansion. Under Abu Bakr, the conquest of Chaldaea was really an accidental result of the Bedouin raids of Banu Shayban under al-Muthanna. When Umar became Caliph, he adopted a policy of centralised direction of the forces of Islam from Medina. Even then he hesitated to stake his all against the Persian Empire beyond the natural boundaries of Iraq. But at this time he realised that a war with Persia to the bitter end was inevitable. He, therefore, adopted a policy of systematic conquest and expansion of Islam and Arabism. It was with this view that he undertook several measures of immense importance in the social and political life and evolution of early Islam. They are, firstly, the institution of the Diwan or the Register of Pensions for the Arab tribes, the foundation of the military cities of Basra, Kufa, etc., the organization of an administrative system in the conquered provinces and the establishment of tribal feudalism in these

provinces. The ban on the apostate Arab tribes of the Riddah Wars was lifted and all the tribes of the Peninsula were encouraged to volunteer for the armies of Islam fighting outside Arabia and to migrate to the new military towns and conquered provinces. This change in the policy of conquest, expansion and colonisation had a tremendous effect of all subsequent history of Islam. Firstly, it firmly united the Arabian tribes to Islam, wedded Islam to Arabianism, peopled the neighbouring lands with the Arabs and strengthened the hold of the Arabs and Islam on the conquered provinces. Every new garrison-city and every new colony of the Arabs became a nucleus and stepping stone for further conquest and expansion in a systematic and continuous manner. Kufa became a base for the conquest of Armenia, Azarbaijan and other northern territories, Basra for the conquest of Khuzistan Persia, Khurasan, etc., and Fustat in Egypt for the conquest of Sudan and North Africa.

Administration of Iraq: Soon after the fall of Madain, Hazrat Umar, assisted by his Shura, undertook the task of re-organising the administrative system of Iraq. The commanders and soldiers, who conquered Iraq, were eager to distribute the conquered lands among themselves and wrote to the Caliph to sanction it. The Caliph held a meeting of his Shura and dicided against this demand. He ordered that those landlords and cultivators who had submitted to the Muslims must not be dispossessed of their ancestoral lands on the condition of paying a tribute. They became the Dhimmis or protected non-Muslim subjects. On the other hand, the crown lands of the Sassanids rulers, the lands of the fugitive nobles and grandees and the lands endowed to fire-temples or reserved for forests, postal service, bridges, etc., were to be confiscated and allotted to Muslim owners. The Caliph expressly forbade the Muslims to acquire land in the conquered province, for they were to remain as life-long soldiers ready to render military service. A great survey of the lands was undertaken and the land revenue was assessed and settled accordingly. The revenues collected were deposited in the Baytal-Mal. They were collected by native dihqans and tax-collectors, under the supervision of Arab Amils. The first charge on the Bayt al-Mal was the expenses of public administration, and the maintenance of public utilities, like the canals, bridges, postal service, etc. After defraying these expenses, the remainder was distributed among the troops stationed in Iraq on the basis of the Diwan or Register of Pensions.

CHAPTER 20

CONQUEST OF SYRIA AND PALESTINE

634—638 A.D.

Situation in Syria at Umar's Accession : As we have said above, Hazrat Abu Bakr received the news of the victory of Anadayn on his death-bed. The Muslim armies were rapidly advancing in Syria at the time of Umar's accession to the Caliphate. Emperor Heraclius had fled from Emesa to Antioch in northern Syria, which became his second capital. From there he organised a new army to drive out the Arab invaders.

Advance on Damascus : In the meanwhile, the Arabs did not remain idle. After his victory at Ajnadayn, Khalid bin Walid fanned out his forces into various directions. He despatched Shurahbil towards Jordan and Amr ibn al-As to Palestine, while he advanced with the bulk of his army under Abu Ubaydah and Yezid towards Damascus.

The ancient city of Damascus, founded by Abraham two thousand years before the Christian era, was a flourishing and walled town and the capital of Byzantine Syria. It was then a Christian city, situated in a fertile valley, watered by a small river, Barada. It had a mild temperate climate, which made it a "Queen of Cities", and a veritable paradise to the Arabs. Moreover, it was surrounded by a populous and prosperous country with innumerable towns and villages, renowned for their agricultural produce, manufactured goods and for commerce and caravan trade. The population was part Syriac, part Greek, especially among the upper classes and part Arabs, especially in the south. Syria, though Christian, was a divided and distracted land. Only seven years before the Arab invasion, it was liberated from the hands of the Persians. It was now subjected to the persecutions of the Orthodox Emperor, Heraclius. These conditions helped the Arab invaders not a little in their rapid advance towards Damascus.

Siege of Damascus, March-September, 635 A. D. In his rapid advance from Ajnadayn Khalid captured Bosra, the capital of the Ghassanid principality, without much resistance. Then he took Fihl in Jordan on January 23, 635 and inflicted a defeat on a Christian army at Marj-as-Suffar on February 25, 635. Two weeks later the Arabs stood before the ancient walls of Damascus and laid siege to it for six months, from March to September, 635

A. D. Khalid summoned also Amr ibn al-As from Palestine and Shurahbil from Jordan. The Byzantine garrison fled fiom the city, now tightly besieged by the Muslims on all sides. Khalid's division was stationed on the east side of the City, near the East Gate, that of Abu Ubaydah at the Gate of Jabiya or West Gate, that of Amr ibn al-As on the north-east and Shurahbil's on the north side. The Byzantine Emperor sent a relieving force from Emesa (Hims), but it was stopped and driven away by the Muslims. This defeat and the irresistable valour of the Muslims inclined the inhabitants to come to terms with Abu Ubaydah on the western side. At this time Khalid's division stormed the walls on its side and entered the town at the point of the sword. The two Muslim forces met in the middle of the City in the bazar of the coppersmiths. After some disputation, the capitulation of the whole city was accepted under a treaty on the following terms.

The Treaty. *"In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. This is the treaty which Khalid ibn-al-Walid has made with the people of Damascus on his entry into their city. He promises to give them security for their lives, property and churches. The wall of their city shall not be demolished and the Muslims shall not be quartered in their houses. We give them the pact of Allah and the protection of His Prophet, the Caliphs and the Believers. So long as they pay the poll tax, nothing but good shall befall them."*

The poll-tax was one dinar and one jarib (about 20 maunds) of wheat per head. It was later increased a little by Hazrat Umar.

After the capitulation of Damascus, Khalid left Yezid in command of the City, while he advanced towards the north against the Greeks. He rapidly captured Ba'lbek, Hims (Emessa), Hamah and other towns between Damascus and Antioch. In fact his rapid advance was not a conquest but a liberation, for the people of the Syrain towns opened the gates and welcomed the Muslim Arabs as their liberators. "The people of Shayzar," as Hitti says, quoting Baladhuri, "went out to meet him (Khalid) accompanied by players on tambourines and singers and bowed down before him." Indeed, as Sir William Muir remarks, the Muslims treated the Christian Syrians with leniency, justice and integrity, in marked contrast to their former Christian Byzantine masters. Though the Muslims had to withdraw from North Syria soon after due to the Greek counter-attack, their brief rule endeared them to the Syrians. "The Syrian Christians," writes Muir, 'enjoyed more civil and political liberty under their Arab invaders than they had done under the rule of Heraclius, and they had no wish to retun to their former state."[1]

1. *The Caliphate, Its Rise, Decline and Fall*, p. 127.

The Byzantine Counter-attack : Nevertheless, the Byzantine counter-attack was being prepared. Emperor Heraclius collected a large army at Antioch and placed it under the command of his brother, Theodorus. While this army marched south, the Emperor approached Hims (Emesa) which Khalid had captured a little time before. Being informed of the Byzantine advance to the south, Khalid, a superb strategist as he was, at once realised the precarious position of the Arabs in northern Syria, with a hostile force moving south to cut off their retreat into the desert. He at once relinquished his hold on Hims and withdrew to the south as far as the river Yermuk, a small tributary of the river Jordan in the Syrian desert.

The Valley of Yermuk : The Desert of Syria is a desert of stones rather than of sand. It is intersected by highlands and deep ravines and valleys of rivers and streams. One of the valley is that of the river Yermuk. To the north of this valley lie the highlands of Jaulan or Hauran and to its south the highlands of Ajlun or Fihl. From the highlands of Jaulan flows another small river into the Yermuk, through a valley called the Wadi-ar-Raqqad. The Yermuk makes a bend to the north where it meets the river Raqqad and forms a small plain inside the northern loop. which was known as Waqusa, or Yaqusa. The battle of Yermuk or Waqusa or Yaqusa. as it is also called, was fought in this small plain, surrounded by the Yermuk and the deed ravine of the Raqqad in the north and the highlands of Ajlun in the south. The exact site of the battlefied, which proved to be one of the decisive battles in the annals of Islam, cannot be located.

The two Armies : The Byzantine army avoiding Damascus marched south through the mountain ranges of the Lebanon, and, crossing the Jordan, reached Waqusa. The Arab army had already reached south of the Yermuk in the highlands of Ajlun. The two armies came face to face on 23rd July, 636 A. D.,/the 12th of Jumada'l Thani, 15 A. H. But no fighting occurred for about a month. The Byzantine army is variously stated as one lakh to two laks and a half strong. It included Greeks, Armenians, Syrian-Arabs and other races. It was commanded by Theodorous, the brother of the Emperor, while Baanes, the Armenian, was second in-command. The Arabs numbered not more than 30,000 men. In spite of their numerical superiority, the Byzantines had no other advantage over the Arabs. They were a heterogeneous force, weakened by racial and religious antipathies among the Greeks, the Armenians and Syrian Arab soldiers and divided by the mutual jealousies and ambitions of their commanders. On the other hand, the Arabs were a disciplined and united force, led by Khalid, the greatest general of the age. Moreover, the Arabs were like a home-team, playing on it own ground. They were fighting within a

desert, to which they were accustomed, whereas the Byzantines were not accustomed to fight in the hot and dusty environment in mid-summer heat of the desert. Weeks of inactivity in intense heat further enervated the Greeks, while quarrels broke out between Theodorous, the Commander-in-Chief and Baanes, the Armenian second-in-command. According to one version, Theodorus was killed and the rebellious troops elected Baanes as the emperor.

Battle of Yermuk : 20 August. 636. After a month of skirmishing, one day, on August 20, 636, a fierce battle ensued. The day was particularly hot and stormy, with dusty winds blowing across the battlefield, which blinded the Byzantines. At first the Christians penetrated the Muslim lines upto their camp, where Muslim women took up arms and drove the enemy back. But at last the Byzantine cavalry was routed and put to flight by the furious onslaught of the Arab lance. Soon after the huge Christian force roped together in companies, was easily defeated. The Arabs outflanked it on the east, while on the west they captured the bridge in the valley of the Raqqad, thus cutting off escape. The defeat than turned into a rout. Most of the Christian soldiers, including Theodorus, were killed on the battlefield, while still greater numbers were drowned in the river or hurled down the precipices of the steep valleys of the tributaries of the Yermuk. Baanes, the Armenian, fled south to Mount Sinai, where he joined a monastery as a monk.

Results : Thus ended the last great battle between Heraclius and the Arabs. It was one of the most decisive battles in the history of Islam. It sealed the fate of Syria, which soon became an Arab province. The Byzantine losses were great, numbering 140,000 while Arabs lost only 3,000 dead. On receiving the news of the terrible defeat of his army, the Emperor, bade farewell to Syria. "Farewell, O Syria, my fair province," he cried, "and what a beautiful prize the enemy has captured." Then he sailed away from Antioch to Constantinople. The Emperor's loss was, indeed, great for he had reconquered Syria from the Persians barely eight years before. The Emperor had hurled his large force against the invaders and saw it shattered to pieces. The Arabs advanced swiftly across the country again, for no worthy force remained now to oppose them. In fact, as Khalid wrote to the Caliph, "Syria is as quiet as a camel."

Dismissal of Khaiid : Soon after his victory, Khalid bin Walid was removed by the Caliph from his supreme command. Abu Ubaydah was appointed in his place as generalissimo of the Arab forces. Many reasons are suggested for Khalid's dismissal. Hazrat Umar, who had great personal regard for Khalid, did not however, like his many acts as a supreme commander. He had not

yet forgiven Khalid for his ill-treatment of Malik Nuwayra and marriage with his wife. Another incidence was his refusal to render account for an item of expenditure of public funds. Khalid have given a present of on thousand dinars to a poet who had composed his panygeric. Umar, who was most scrupulous in regard to public money, took Khalid to task for his extravagance and misappropriation of public funds. Refusing to render account, he was ordered to be tied with his own turban before his soldiers. It was the Arab fashion of demoting a commander. When he declared that he had given one thousand dinars from his personal purse, he was set free and exonerated of all charges. But Khalid remained with Abu Ubaydah as an ordinary soldier. He achieved many victories afterwards, which made Hazrat Umar remark, "Khalid by winning such victories, has made himself a commander. In fact, Abu Bakr was a better judge of other men than I". This ungerudging acknowledgement of Khalid's achievements show that Umar was not prompted in his action by feelings of personal jealousy or ill-will. "Least of all," as Muir says, can personal dislike have influenced him. Umar was too great for that." The reasons which made him to dismiss Khalid were really the material severity of Khalid, his extravagance in personal matters, and above all, as Umar said himself, "the equality of all in the eyes of God." He sought to teach the Muslims that victories of Khalid were from God and not due to the military talent and prowess of Khalid. In the end, it must be kept in mind that the decisive victory of Yermuk had completed the task of a great conqueror like Khalid. The need was now for a man who was good and mild administrator. "The military chief," says Muir, "had to give place to the civil functionary ; the sword to the pen ; Khalid to Abu Obayda."[1]

Systematic Occupation of Syria : Like the victory of Qadisiya, in Iraq, the victory of Yermuk basically changed Umar's policy of conquest in Syria. Whereas formerly Arab armies advanced in the direction where victories were won, now a policy of systematic occupation of Syria was adopted by the Caliph. However, such a policy necessitated a supreme commander, in whom the Caliph had full confidence to act his vicegerent. Abu Ubaydah was just such a person. He was not only one of the earliest and most esteemed Companions of the Prophet, but was also a leading figure among the Muslims since the death of the Prophet. In fact he and Umar had played the decisive role in the election of Hazrat Abu-Bakr, as we have said above. So when he replaced Khalid in supreme command, he set his subordinate commanders to a systematic conquest of Syria and Palestine. While he himself marched, along with Khalid as his second-in-command, towards Damascus

1. *Op. cit., p. 130.*

and northern Syria, he despatched Shurahbil and Yezid towards Jordan and Lebanon and Amr ibn-al-As towards Jerusalem and Palestine. Al-Jabiya, a town to the north of the Yermuk, was now made the military camp in Syria for its systematic conquest.

Damascus was captured again a month after the battle of Yermuk and exactly after a year of its first capture. Then Abu Ubaydah in quick succession took the towns of Ba'lbek, Emesa (Hims), Aleppo, Antioch and Qinnasrin in north Syria. Only in Qinnasrin there was some resistance, while all other towns fell without fighting. In fact, Baladhuri says that the people of Hims opened the gates of their city, for they said to the Arabs, "We like your rule and justice far better than the state of oppression and tyranny under which we have been living." Another factor which contributed to the easy victory of the Muslims was the wise policy of Hazrat Umar. He wrote to his military commanders in Syria to invite the Syrian Arabs to join Muslim Armies. Many of them did so and augmented the forces of Islam. At the same time Shurahbil advanced into the valley of the Jardon and captured Acca (Acre), Tyre and Sepphoris on the coast of the Mediterranean. Yezid, marching to his north, took Sidon, Jubayl and Bayrut on the coast. Thus by the end of 638, the conquest of Syria was completed.

Capture of Jerusalem : Only a few fortified towns, like Jerusalem, Ramlah and Caesarea, still resisted the Arabs. They were inhabited more by the Greeks than the Syrian Arabs, which account for their stiffer resistance. Amr ibn al-As advanced against Jerusalem and laid seige to it. The Byzantine commander, Artabun, slinked out of the city on Amr's approach, leaving the Partriarch, Sophronius, in control of the city. He soon found resistance futile and offered to surrender the city on the condition that the Caliph must take its keys from him in person.

On receiving this request, Umar consulted his council of advisers and decided to proceed to Jerusalem. He travelled from Medina to Jerusalem, accompanied by no escort but only his slave, with whom he exchanged place on the camel's back in turn. On the last lap of the journey, it was the slave's turn to sit on the camel. Thus Umar, leading the camel by the string, approached the gates of Jerusalem, though he was at that time the most powerful ruler in the world. The Patriarch delivered him the keys of Jerusalem. The Caliph entered the city and was shown the sacred places all over it by the Patriarch. While in the Church of the Resurrection, prayer-time came. The Patriarch requested the Caliph to prayer where he stood. But he very wisely and graciously declined the offer with the remark that if he prayed there, the Muslims would turn the Church into a Mosque

on the plea that prayer was offered by him. The Caliph granted a treaty to the people of Jerusalem or Aelia, as it was then called. It is worth quoting here for its spirit of tolerance, justice and peaceful treatment of non-Muslims.

Treaty of Umar: "In the name of God, the most Mereciful and Compassionate."

"This is the treaty for the people of Aelia, granted by Umar, the servant of God and the Commander of the Faithful. He gives them the guarantee of their lives and properties, their churches and crosses. Your churches will not be transformed into dwelling houses, nor destroyed, nor will any one confiscate anything belonging to them. The inhabitants will not be subjected to any compulsion or constraint in matters of religion, nor shall they be in any way molested, Jews shall reside in Aelia with the Christians. The people of Aelia (Jerusalem) shall pay jizya as people of other towns do. They must also turn out Greeks and robbers. But the Greeks shall have safe-conduct until they reach a place of security. But those Greeks who stay behind shall pay jizya like the rest of the inhabitants. If any of the people of Aelia desire to leave with the Greeks, they too will be granted safe-conduct till they reach a place of security, provided they take their goods, but leave behind their chapels and crosses. The strangers in the town may remain on the same condition of paying the tax, or, if they wish, they may leave also with the Greeks, and return to their own lands. They will have nothing to pay until one harvest shall have been gathered in. Whatever is contained in this treaty is placed under the alliance and protection of God, and of his Apostle (peace be upon him) and of his successors, and of the faithful, so long as they pay the tax."

"Witnessed by Khalid ibn al-Walid, Amr ibn al-As, Abdar Rahman ibn Auf and Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan."

After concluding this treaty, Hazrat Umar returned to Medina. Amr ibn al-As afterwards reduced the remaining towns in Palestine. Muawiyah, who had succeeded to his brother, Yezid, reduced towns like Caesarea, which were heavily fortified and strongly Hellenised. This fact might account for their longer resistance to the Arabs. Other Syrian towns were inhabited by Syrian Arabs. They were now joining their fellow-Arab Muslim invaders in ever greater numbers, for the Byzantine power was finally shattered after the battle of Yermuk. The Arabs were welcomed as deliverers from Byzantine tyranny, which was no longer feared. Thus by October, 640, when Caesarea was taken the whole of Syria and Palestine were subjected to Muslim rule. In order to round off the Arab occupation of north Syria, Iyaz bin Ghanam was sent with a force against al-Jazirah or Upper Iraq, which then formed a province of the

Byzantine Empire. He subdued it during 639-646. He met with little or no resistance by the Romans till he reached the natural borders of Asia Minor. These borders remained a boundary line, though troubled, between Islam and Christianity, for several centuries to come.

Rebellion in Syria: Before the final subjugation of Syria, the Byzantine made one more bid at its recovery. The Empeı er stirred up a rebellion in the province in 638 A. D. The rebellion started first among the Christian Bedouin tribes of Upper Iraq, yet weakly held by the Arabs. Moreover, Caesarea and a long strip of the Syrian coast was still in Byzantine hands. The Arabs had neither seige weapons to capture fortified towns nor a navy to drive away the Byzantine ships and raiders off the coast of Syria and Palestine. The Emperor launched a three-pronged attack on Syria from Asia Minor in the north, Mesopotamia in the east and a naval expedition from the west coast of Syria and Palestine. The Greeks landed from their ships and easily captured Antioch. Another Greek force advanced from the north and besieged Hims, while the towns of Qinnasrin, Aleppo and others were in revolt.

Abu Ubaydah, now the Chief Commander and Governor of Syria, reacted vigorously and promptly. He summoned the garrisons from outlying towns and also wrote to the Caliph for reinforcements. Umar ordered Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, the Governor of Kufa to send reinforcements to Syria. Fearing the gravity of the situation, Hazrat Umar left Medina for Jabiya, the military camp near Yermuk to be near the scene of fighting. But the tide of war now turned in favour of the Muslims. The Bedouin allies of the Greeks, fearing their desert homes to be far away and unsafe, deserted the Emperor's army and returned home. Upon this, Abu Ubaydah ordered his forces in Hims to attack the besiegers. He routed them after a brief fighting, even before the Iraqi reinforcements had arrived. Umar returned to Medina. In order to prevent further troubles from Mesopotamia, Iyaz completed its conquest and even captured several towns in Asia Minor. Many Christian tribes of Mesopotamia now accepted Islam, while those which refused were driven out. The Caliph, however, permitted the Christian tribe of Banu Taghlib to keep their Christian faith and yet pay not jizya but Zakat, like other Arab tribes. A year after the suppression of Syrian revolt, Caesarea, the last town in Byzantine hands, was also captured by Muawiya, after Amr ibn al-As, and Yezid had failed in similar attempts earlier.

Plague of Amwas: A terrible epidemic of plague broke out in Hims, Damascus and other towns of Syria, garrisoned by Arab troops. It first began in the town of Amwas, from where it spread over the whole province and even beyond. Thousands of Arabs

perished in it. The people were struck down and died suddenly. The reports of this scourage perturbed Umar so much that he himself left Medina for Syria. The Muslim Commanders met him at Tabuk, where a Shura was held. It was finally decided that the Arab troops should be withdrawn from the afflicted localities and stationed in the highlands of Hauran. But in spite of all efforts and precautions, 25,000 of Arab soldiers perished in the plague. Many families lost several members. It is said that Khalid bin Walid lost forty sons, while fleeing to the desert from the place and another Medinese family lost seventy members leaving only four survivors. The greatest losses were of Hazrat Abu Ubaydah, who died of the epidemic near al-Jabiya, Muadh bin Jabal, who had succeeded him as supreme commander, Shurahbil bin Hasana, who died on the same day as Abu Ubaydah and Yezid bin Abu Sufyan, who died at Damascus.

Administration of Syria: The terrible devastation caused by the plague made the Caliph to visit Syria for the third time. The purpose was not only to settle affairs of the Muslims, so upset by the plague, but also to organise the administration of the province on a more sound and stable basis. So the Caliph travelled to Syria in 639, by the usual route of Ayla on the Gulf of Aqaba, and reached al-Jabiya, the military camp near Yermuk. As Abu Ubaydah and Yezid, the two former governors had died in the plague, the Caliph appointed Muawiyah as the Governor of Syria,—a post which he held till he became himself a Caliph nearly twenty years after. His appointment, however, attracted no notice and roused no opposition or criticism at this time, for neither Hazrat Ali nor Muawiyah had yet laid claims to the sovereignty of Islam.

Syria was divided into four military districts or *junds*, corresponding to the earlier Byzantine divisions. They were Damascus, Hims, Jordan and Palestine. A fifth district of Qinnasrin was later added by Yezid I, the Umayyad Caliph. Each district was under a military commander. But the Commander at Damascus acted as the Supreme Commander and Governor-General, in his capacity as a vicegerent of the Caliph in the newly-conquered territories.

The Dhimmis: The non-Muslim inhabitants of Syria and Palestine, Christians, Jews and others, were allowed to keep their faith on two conditions: to pay taxes and remain peaceful and loyal to their new masters. On accepting these conditions, often reduced to writing in the form of treaties or contracts, they became the "protected people" or *Ahl-adh-Dhimma*, or briefly *Dhimmis*, for they were under the protection of Islam.

Jizya and Kharaj : Jizya was a poll-tax. Its amount, paid by all able-bodied men, was higher in Syria, because it was a fertile

and cultivated land. It varied between four dinars or forty dirhams for richer people, two dinars or twenty dirhams for middle-class people, and one dinar or ten dirhams for poorer sections. Women, children, invalids, mendicants and monks were exempted from payment of jizya. The second tax, Kharaj or land-tax, was levied on all non-Muslim land-owners and cultivators. It was imposed under the treaties with them, and varied in amount. It was paid both in cash and kind.

Constitution of Umar : Hazrat Umar made several treaties with the inhabitants of the various towns and cities of Syria and Palestine, one of which, the Treaty of Jerusalem, we have quoted above. They are known as the Contracts of Umar. In later times, the medieval Muslim jurists, writers and historians commented upon these treaties of Umar and evolved the Muslim Law of war and peace, international relations, treaties and treatment of the Dhimmis or non-Muslim minorities of the Islamic State. They throw great light on the constitutional structure of the Islamic State, as set up by Hazrat Umar.

These treaties granted rights and freedoms to the non-Muslim subjects of the Islamic State and also imposed a number of duties and responsibilities upon them. They were guaranted freedom of religion and conscience, rights of property and life, freedom of trade and commerce, freedom of personal law and equality before law in criminal cases. At the same time these treaties imposed certain responsibilities and restraints upon them. They had to remain peaceful and loyal to the Islamic State and pay taxes, as mentioned above. Moreover, they had to perform twelve duties, six compulsory and six desirable. The necessary duties were (*i*) not to insult the Quran, the Holy Prophet, and Islam, (*ii*) not to marry Muslim women (*iii*) not to attempt to convert a Muslim or injure his life or property and (*iv*) not to assist the enemies of Islam or harbour spies. If any Dhimmi was found violating these duties, he was no longer under the protection of the Islamic State and could be killed as an outlaw. The six desirable restraints were a distinctive clothing, like *ghiyar* or yellow patch on their dress and a *zannar* or a girdle, not to build houses higher than those of the Muslims, not to sound their wooden bells or *naqus* loudly, not to drink wine in public or their swine to be seen, to bury their dead in silence and, lastly, not to mount a horse. The breach of these duties was punishable only by fines.

Chapter 21

CONQUEST OF EGYPT

640-41 A. D./19-20 A. H.

Egypt was another Byzantine province to be conquered by the Arabs. It was, however, an achievement of one man alone, Amr ibn al-As. He had a knowlege of that country, for he had visited it as a Qurayshite trader before his adoption of Islam. He was ambitious to conquer it. So, when the Caliph was on his third visit to Syria, after the plague of Amwas, Amr sought his permission to invade Egypt.

Geography of Egypt : Like Iraq and Syria, Egypt is also one ancient lands of the East. Under the ancient Pharaohs, it was a proud and independent country. But then it became a slave of several foreign conquerors. The last of them were the Romans, who subsequently changed into the Eastern Romans or Byzantines. Egypt is a land of one river. the Nile, but it is a mighty river. Practically the whole population of Egypt lives in the valley and delta of the Nile, where are all her great cities, towns and villages. The rest of the country to the east and west of the Nile is a barren desert, with a few fertile oases here and there. The great Nile rises in the heart of Africa and flows down to the north leisurly till it falls down the cataracts of Sudan into the lowlands of upper Egyyt near Aswan, famous even in the days of the Pharaohs who built splendid monuments in its neighbourhood. From Aswan the river enters a broad valley till it reaches the Delta in Lower Egypt. There it branches out and falls into the Mediterranean. The valley and the Delta are watered by the annual floods of the Nile, which begin from about May and subside in about October every year. During these six months or so. Egypt is literally under water. But when the floods end, the whole valley is covered with fertile silt which fertilises its fields and farms. That is why Egypt became the granary of Rome, then of Constantinople, and was later to become the granary of Medina under the Pious Caliphs.

Conditions in Egyyt on the eve of Arab invasion. Egypt had been in Persian hands only a couple of decades before. The Persians had captured it in 616 A.D., and ruled it till 628 A.D. Though their rule was brief, it was far more just, fair and tolerant than that of the Byzantines. Schism prevailed in Byzantine Christianity. Like Syria, Egypt was also divided into two Christian Churches, the native Coptic church, headed by Benjamin, was

Monophysite, while the Emperor and his dominant church was Orthodox Monothelete. The Emperor deputed Cyrus to Egypt with the instructions to crush the Coptic Church and Monophysite heresy by blood and terror, and thereby unite all Christians under the Monotheletism of the Orthodox Church. Cyrus arrived in Alexandria in 630 A. D., in his double capacity of the head of the Church and State in Egypt. He at once began to persecute all those who rejected Monothelete dogma. Benjamin, the Coptic Patriarch, finding resistance impossible, fled to Upper Egypt and hid himself in a monastery. He called upon his Coptic followers to do the same. For ten years Cyrus persecuted the Copts on religious grounds. His religious oppression was aggravated by economic exploitation and political tyranny. The fertile valley of Egypt had become the granary of the Byzantine Empire, supplying ship-loads of corn to Constantinople, the Byzantine capital. In fact, all the fertile lands in Egypt were owned by Greek landlords and nobles, and cultivated by Coptic peasants and serfs. As ever, the native peasantry was cruelly exploited by their foreign masters and ground down by poverty, misery and squalor. It was in such conditions of oppression and tyranny, poverty and squalor that Arab invasion came. Though, unlike Syria, there were no native Arab tribes to welcome the Muslim invaders, yet these conditions inclined the native population to welcome the Arabs as their deliverers from Byzantine persecutions and misrule.

Causes of Arab Invasion : Some Arab historians, loving dramatic presentation of historical facts, asserted that the conquest of Egypt was solely due to the military ambitions of Amr ibn al-As, and that he persuaded an unwilling Caliph to launch an attack on Egypt. Though there is an element of truth in this assertion it is not, however, the whole truth, nor does it present the situation as it existed then. Sir William Muir and Professor Hitti have made Amr's ambitions the sole cause of Arab conquest of Egypt We have, however, to keep all facts in view in order to discover the real causes of Arab invasion.

By the end of 640 A. D./19 A. H., the Muslims had subdued whole of Syria and Palestine. But their hold on the coquered provinces was, indeed, precarious. The recent uprising in North Syria had shown the Arabs how the Byzantines could launch three-pronged attack on their possession from the north, the east and from the west across the Mediterranean Sea. The protracted resistance of the coastal towns, like Caesarea, and frequent naval raids also illustrated the Arab weakness in navy and siege weapons. Though driven from the land, the Byzantines were still masters of the water and their naval supremacy over the Mediterranean was still unaffected and unchallenged. Egypt was, indeed their base for naval operations against the Arab towns and possessions on

the Syrian and Palestinian coasts. Alexandria was their naval base and dockyard in Egypt, while they had also a naval base in Qulzam (modern Suez) at the head of the Red Sea. The Caliph and his government in Medina were apprehensive that the Byzantine Egypt would become a base of operations, naval and military, for the reconquest of Syria, as was attempted only a couple of years before.

These apprehensions were increased by the weakening of the Arab military power by the great plague of Amwas. It decimated a great part of Arab forces in Syria. 2500 soldiers were killed by this scourge. Even the survivors were so enervated as to be unable to resist Byzantine invasion. It became necessary to forestall their attack by conquering Egypt, if need be with such meagre forces as 4,000 troops which Amr led against them. The invasion of Egypt was indeed, a preventive war which the Arabs launched against a hostile Christian Power, before it could discover the temporary weakness of the new Muslim Power.

Furthermore, the conquest of Egypt falls within the period of systematic conquests, which now became the policy of the Caliph. Its conquest was desirable objective, for Egypt was renowned for its fertility and abundant crops. This is proved by the fact that soon after its conquest, the corn of Egypt was transported to Medina through the re-dug Suez Canal of the ancient Pharoahs. In fact, the fast growing population of Medina, Mecca and other towns of Hijaz, could only be fed by the abundant produce of Egypt. This was what Amr ibn al-As told the Caliph when he visited al-Jabiya in 639 A. D. He also said that the loss of Egypt would weaken the Byzantines and incapacitate them against future raids and invasions of Arab possessions.

Though the Caliph had his own doubt of waging a war with limited resources in unknown land, Amr had none, for he had personal knowledge of Egyptian conditions. The poverty and misery of the Coptic population, the luxury and indolence of the Byzantine nobility and clergy, the bitter hatred between the foreign masters and native population, engendered by religious persecutions of Heraclius and Cyrus, and their Civil and Church representatives created just such conditions which would augur well for Arab victory. Moreover, Amr told the Caliph that Artabun, the Byzantine commander of Jerusalem, had fled with his army to Egypt and might attack again, if his army was not driven out of that province. The Caliph at last granted him his permission, though reluctantly, for he had no sufficient forces for this undertaking. But he asked him to wait till he had returned to Medina, consulted his Shura and sent reinforcements.

Persecutions of the Copts : Cyrus was sent to Egypt by the Emperor in 631, as the Patriarch and the head of the entire civil administration. In his double capacity, he was a perfect instrument of the Imperial policy of uniting the Monophysite Copt under the new formula of Monothelitism of the Orthodox Church of the Byzantium. He was empowered to follow this policy by religious persecution of those Coptic elergy who refused to accept the new formula. Cyrus (Qirus of Arab historians) followed, for ten years, this policy of presecutions with a vengeance. The Coptic form of worship was forbidden, its clergy were persecuted, imprisoned or driven into exile or hiding, like Benjamin, the Coptic Patriarch. As the Emperor had exhausted his treasury and was crying for more money from his provinces, Cyrus imposed greater taxes on the Coptic population, thus adding fuel to fire of their religious hatred and revolt. "It is no wonder that this dreaded imperial representative and Patriarch appeard to later Coptic tradition to be the veritable Antichrist."

Amr Invades Egypt : Dec. 639—January, 640. After he had secured the reluctant consent of Hazrat Umar, Amr ibn al-As collected a picked force of 4,000 soldiers and marched along the coastal route towards al-Farma, (Pelusiam of the Romans) the frontier fortress on Egyptian border with Palestine in December, 639. After a brief fighting he captured this fortress in January, 640, which was the first town on Egyptian side to fall into Arab hands. Though, it is said, he received a Caliphal letter, forbidding him against invasion, he wrote to the Caliph of the opening of hostilities and shedding of first blood and, therefore, requested him for reinforcements. But before Amr received any aid from Medina, he had entered Egyptian land and skirting the Delta, marched towards Upper Egypt. On the way, he captured the town of Bilbis without much fighting.

Siege of Babylon : April, 640—9 April, 641. Marching along the eastern bank of the Nile, Amr advanced towards the city of Misr (or Memphis), which was, though no longer the capital of Egypt, still the most important city and seat of the government of Upper Egypt. Its importance is shown by the fact that Cyrus, who was the Byzantine Emperor's viceroy of Egypt, and Artabun, the Byzantine commander of Jerusalem, had both rallied their forces in Babylon, which was a fort on the Nile, guarding Memphis. On hearing of Amr's advance upstream, Cyrus had hurried from Alexandria to Babylon along with a Greek force under the command of Theodorus. In all the Greeks had assembled a large army in Babylon, estimated between 20,000 to 100,000 soldiers.

Amr ibn al-As marched upstream and on the way captured

Heliopolis (Ain ash-Shams) in July, 640. It was defended by a mixed force of the Copts, Nubians (Sudanese) and Greeks, which was easily defeated by 4,000 troops of Amr. Cyrus fled to Memphis and shut himself up in the fortress of Babylon. Amr soon laid siege to it, after he had captured several quarters in the City of Memphis. In July 640, when Amr was before the walls of Heliopolis, Zubayr bin al-Awwam had arrived from Medina with a reinforcement of about 10,000 men. Thus Amr had now about 14,000 men under his command, opposed by 20,000 or more of Byzantine forces in Babylon only. He laid seige to it, which lasted for several months. The Nile began to rise in June in the valley around Babylon which handicapped Arab operations against other towns. At last after eight months of siege, the fortress of Babylon capitulated to Amr ibn al-As on Easter Monday, 9th April, 641. Cyrus negotiated the terms of surrender, and sailed downstream to Alexandria. With the fall of Babylon, whole of Eastern and Upper Egypt lay in the hands of Amr. He then captured Fiyum and crossed the Nile in order to march along its western bank towards Alexandria.

The Greek resistance had virtually broken down. The Copts now began actively to take sides with the Arabs, which facilitated Amr's rapid advance against Alexandria. He now took full advantage of the Coptic bitterness against the Greeks. Their will to resist had broken by their successive defeats and by the news of the death of Emperor Heraclius in Feburary, 641. Cyrus was now convinced of Muslim victory and was contemplating to surrender Egypt to them on favourable conditions. He had gone to Constantinople with such proposals after the fall of Babylon. But he was exiled by Heraclius on charges of treason.

Pre-Islamic Alexandria : Alexandria was, indeed, the second city of the Byzantine Empire, a centre of immense riches, great commerce and was at the pinnacle of civilisation and culture for several centuries past. It was a cosmopolitan city of several races, Greeks, Copts, Jews, and Christians, etc., religions and tongues, Greek, Coptic, Hebrew, etc. It was inhabited by several lakh people, of whom the male population was estimated to be 600,000. Among them were 200,000 Greeks, and 40,000 Jews. This vast city had, according to Arab estimates, 4000 public baths, 400 theatres, and 4000 villas. It was a port, where 12,000 vessels could dock at one time and was also a naval base of the Byzantines. Lofty buildings, like the Serapeum, which once housed the great Library of Alexandria, and the Temple of Serapis, were the sky-scrapers of the ancient world. Some of the wonders of Alexandria were the two red Aswan-granite "needles of Cleopatra," which stood in it once. Another great edifice was the Pharos, the light tower, which reflected the sun's rays by day and its own fire by

night and was rightly considered as one of the seven wonders of the world.

Fall of Alexandrja : Marching north along the western bank of the Nile, Amr captured Nikiu at the head of the Delta in May. 641. He then reached in the vicinity of Alexandria, whose high defence walls and towering edifices deeply impressed the sons of the desert.

The city was defended by a garrison of 50,000 soldiers, a number twice greater than 20,000 men under Amr ibn al-As. Sixteen miles from the city Amr fought and defeated a Greek force, which fled within its walls. When the Arabs approached the walls, in September, 641, they were repulsed by the defenders with fire and missiles. To lay siege to such a huge city, was an impossible task, for the Arabs had no siege weapons and, still worse no navy worth the name. But the Greek Government at Constantionople was in a state of chaos and decrepitude after the death of Heraclius. His minor son, Constans II (642—68) and his wife, Empress Martina, had no stomach for endless war against the Arabs. Cyrus was recalled from the exile and sent to Alexandria to make peace with them. He was now a different man than Cyrus, the civil and eccelesiastical oppressor of Emperor Heraclius' days. He reached Alexandria on 14th September, 641 and opened negotiations with Amr ibn-al-As. Though his activities during this period are somewhat obscure, it is said that he visited Amr at Babylon, where Amr had returned to subdue outlying part of Upper Egypt. He concluded a treaty with Amr at Babylon about Alexandria on November 8, 641. It is known as the Treaty of Alexandria, by which the city was to be surrendered to the Arabs in September, 642, and the payment of Jizya of two dinars per head and a land tax in kind. The Byzantine garrison was to evacuate the city in peace, but no attempt at re-conquest was to be made afterwards. When the people of Alexandria came to know of the terms of surrender of their city there was a violent popular reaction against it. But Cyrus convinced them of the hopelessness of war and the benefits of peaceful surrender. So the city was handed over to the Arabs as stipulated without any resistance in September, 642.

With the surrender of Alexandria, the conquest of Egypt was virtually completed. Cyrus, however, did not live to realise his plan of becoming the primate of the Coptic Church under the rule of the Arabs for he died in March, 642. In order to protect Alexandria against any attack from the west, Amr advanced towards Cyrenica during 642-43 and occupied the North African coast upto Barqa without any difficulty. He had already pushed

Arab arms towards Nubia (modern Sudan). But it was finally subdued in the days of the next Caliph, Uthman.

Foundation of Fustat : As soon as Umar received the news of the fall of Alexandria, he turned his attention towards the administration of the new province. Amr intended to make Alexandria the capital of the Muslim Egypt as it was formerly of the Byzantine Egypt. The Caliph was against this plan. He feared the effects of the luxurious environment of the City on the simple Bedouins of Arabia. But his opposition was mainly because of the Nile which separated it from Medina. "Let no water intervene between me and thee", he wrote to Amr, "and do not camp in any place which I cannot reach riding on my camel." Accordingly, Amr pitched his military camp near Babylon on the eastern bank of the Nile. It came to be known as Fustat, derived from the Greek term "phossaton", meaning a camp. It was constructed on the same plan as Kufa and Basra in Iraq. Its construction started even before the surrender of Alexandria in 642. The mosque, the first of its kind in Egypt, was first constructed, beside which was built the Dar ul-Imarah, the Govrrnment House. The quarters of the Arabs were laid around, each tribe getting a quarter of its own. From the names of the tribes which were first stationed in Fustat, we come to know that the southern Arabian tribe predominated in Amr's forces. Soon Fustat became the capital of the Muslim Egypt, and remained till the days of the Fatimids, who built a new one near it, called Cairo. The mosque of Fustat, though re-built much later, came to be known as the Mosque of Amr, after its first builder. It is now situated in one of the quarters of the modern Cairo.

Administration : Amr ibn al-As, the first Governor of Muslim Egypt, did not bring about any radical change in the earlier Byzantine system of administration. The old machinery of administration and finance was preserved. The Greek language and Coptic tax-collectors and functionaries were employed under Arab military and civilian heads. The Coptic population, peasantry and merchants, were required to pay uniform Jizya of two dinars each and a land tax. A register of tax-payers was kept in every village. When the demand for taxes came from Fustat the local Coptic tax collectors collected the taxes from the people and delivered them to Arab officials. The soil was left in the hands of the old occupants, on payment of taxes. Egypt soon became the granary of Arabia. Amr won the hearts of the Coptic population by not only granting them freedom of worship in their Monophysite faith, but also reinstating their fugitive Patriarch, Benjamin, in his office.

Suez Canal : In order to trans-ship the corn of Egypt to

Medina and Hijaz, Amr ibn al-As, on Caliphal instructions, re-dug and repaired the ancient Pharaonic Canal which linked the Delta of the Nile with the Red Sea at Suez or Qulzum. It came to be known as the Canal of the Amir al-Mumineen. So much of the produce of Egypt reached the markets of Medina that price of food-grain slumped down. It is said that twenty ships reached the ports of Arabia every year laden with Egyptian produce.

Chapter 22

FINAL SUBJUGATION OF PERSIA

Third stage of the war with Persian Empire : We return to the East once again. where the third and final stage in the subjugation of the Persian Empire of the Sassanids had already commenced. We have said above that when the Muslims had captured Hulwan on the western slopes of the Zagros range Hazrat Umar had forbidden Sad's troops to go further. He similarly stopped Utba to pursue the Persians beyond the eastern banks of the Shatt-ul-Arab after he had captured Ubulla, the capital of Chaldaea. The Caliph believed that the Iraq-Persian borders marked by the Zagros range were the proper limits of the Arabian Empire, beyond which he would not risk his troops. But the march of events compelled him to sanction Arab advance beyond these natural boundries. He soon found that in the face of Persian intrigues in Arab possessions, where many people still looked towards Yezdjard, the Arabs could not hold Iraq without crushing Sassanid rule in Persia proper. Arab hold on Iraq would not be secure so long as its recovery might be attempted from Persia behind the mountain range. Moreover, the Arab commanders also could not hold the troubled borders in South Persia without marching across them. The renewed fighting in South Persia constrained the Caliph to sanction advance into South Persia. It eventually led to the final subjugation of the whole of Persia.

Geography of Persia : Persia proper is a vast country, stretching from the shores of the Caspian Sea in the north to the coast of the Persian Gulf in the south. It is a vast plateau, divided into several provinces and regions, partly by geographical conditions, and partly by historicial tradtions and political divisions. They were the mountainous Daylem and Tabaristan on the eastern bank of the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan on its western coast. In the middle of the Persian plateau, between the Caspian coast and Khuzistan, lay the land known as Media in ancient time, and called Iraq al-Ajami by the Arabs. It possessed several great cities of Ancient Iran, like Rai, (near modern Tehran), Hamadan, Nihavand (Ecbatana, one of the capitals of ancient Iran). It was protected from Iraq by the Zagros range. To its south, along the lower ranges of the Zagros lay the province of Khuzistan (called Susiana in ancient times), where were situated such famous cities as Ahwaz on the river Karun, a tributary of the Tigris, Sus (once a capital of ancient Iran), Jundai-Shapur, Tustar and Ram Harmuz—all flourishing cities at the time of Arab invasion. To the south of

Khuzistan was the ancient Province of Faris, stretching along the eastern coast of the Persian Gulf. It had several ancient cities and capitals of Iran, like Istakhar (Persepolis), Shiraz and Isfahan. To the east of these provinces were Khurasan in the north-eastern corner of the Sassanid Empire, with Nishapur and Merv as its two important cities, Sistan in the east and Kirman and Makran, two desert provinces in the extreme south, bordering on Sind in the South Asian sub-continent. Though nominally whole of the Empire was under the fugitive Yazdjard III, who had set up his court at Merv in Khurasan, these provinces were in fact under semi-independent governors. Persian Empire had lost its political unity and cohesion several years before Arab conquest. It was the threat of the Arab conquest and loss of Iraq, which had partially restored the authority of Yazdjard in outlying provinces. The immediate cause of war was the loss of Khuzistan to the Arabs and their advance upon Istakhar in Faris Province.

Arab Descent upon South Persia : 637-41 : Hazrat Umar had expressly forbidden his governors of al-Madian and Ubulla, Sa'd and Utba respectively, against further advance into Persia, beyond the Zagros range. But, Al-Ala bin Hazrami, the governor of Bahrayn in Arabian Peninsula had been inactive since the days of Hazrat Abu Bakr when he had suppressed apostasy in that part of Arabia. He too was ambitious to emulate the victories of his fellow-Muslims in Persia. So without the permission and even knowledge of the Caliph, he crossed the Persian Gulf in 637 A. D. with an army and descended upon the coast of Faris with a view to conquer this province. At first he met with no resistance. Persians reteated before him, till he reached near Istakhar. But the retreat was a stratagem and he soon found himself in a trap. His little force was surrounded by a large Persian army, with retreat to the ships cut off. In this predicament Al-Ala appealed to the Caliph for aid. Though indignant with his senseless expedition, the Caliph sent urgent orders to Utba in Basra which was recently constructed, to go to the help of Al-Ala. Utba marched out at the head of 12,000 troops of Basra towards him, rescued his beleagured army, defeated the Persians and brought it back safely to Basra. Thus hostilities with the Persians were re-opened in Persia proper. The unsuccessful expedition of Al-Ala is known as the First Istakhar. The Caliph, however, dismissed Al-Ala from the governorship of Bahrayn for this unauthorised enterprise.

Campaign in Khuzistan 638 A. D. The Arab raid in Faris provoked Hurmuzan, the Persian Governor of Khuzistan, to raid Arab outposts near Ahwaz. He was one of the Persian generals in the Battle of Qadisiya and had fled to Khuzistan from there. His raids compelled Utba the governor of the neighbouring Basra, to

march upon Ahwaz. He defeated Hurmuzan and forced him to cede Ahwaz to the Arabs and retire to the eastern banks of the river Karun. But hardly had Utba returned to Basra, when the Persians violated the truce. This brought the Muslims again to Ahwaz where they defeated Hurmuzan and forced him to come to peace with the Arabs. This time the Muslims appealed to the Caliph to permit them to pursue the treacherous Persians beyond Ahwaz. But the Caliph forbade them. Instead of that, he ordered them to repair the canals and promote the prosperity and well-being of the territory already in their possession.

Yazdjard rouses the Persians against the Arabs: Soon after the return of peace in Khuzistan, a new wave of rebellion started there, for the agents of Yazdjard roused the people against the Arabs. Hurmuzan began to make active preparations to violate the truce. The Caliph, being informed of them, ordered a powerful army from Kufa and Basra to march against him. It was placed under the command of Numan bin Muqran. He defeated the army under Hurmuzan and captured Ram Hurmuz. Hurmuzan fled to Tustar, fifty miles from Ahwaz, where too he was defeated and captured by the Arabs after a siege of several months. He was sent to Medina. The Arabs continued to advance and captured Sus, Jundai-Shahpur and other towns, till they reached Isfahan which was besieged by them. In the meanwhile, news reached Medina of fresh preparations by Yazdjard. who had collected a huge army in Khurasan for the invasion of Iraq.

Umar's agonising re-appraisal of his policy: Successive Persian rebellions and news of new preparations for a great war disquieted the Caliph. He invited a delegation of ten men from Kufa to investigate the causes of Persian discontent against Arab rule. The deputation reached Medina at the same time as the Persian prisoners reached there from Ahwaz, including their commander Hurmuzan. "What is the cause of the persistent breach of peace by the Persians?", enquired the Caliph from the members of the Kufan deputation. "Is it not that you treat them harshly?" "Not so," they replied, "it is not that we treat them harshly that they revolt but due to their King's instigation to do so. You have forbidden us to enlarge our boundary. Secure within his territories, the King constantly incites our Persian subjects to revolt against us after they have submitted to us. Two Kings cannot live together; either we or the Persian King must expel the other. And so the Persian revolts will go on until you lift the ban against further advance and permit us to nip Persian intrigues in their own homeland. Not till then will their hopes and machinations cease." Hurmuzan, who had already arrived in Medina and accepted Islam, also supported this view. The Caliph at last reluctantly realized the true situation in Persia. He re-appraised his policy of banning further advance. He was

convinced that he could not hold Iraq in peace so long Yazjard and Persian Government in Khurasan existed to excite revolts in Iraq and endeavour to re-conquer lost provinces. The ban must be withdrawn in self-defence and Persian King must be crushed and his Empire must be entirely conquered. Once again the Caliph resolved to rouse Arabia against Persia for the last round of the long-drawn struggle.

Yazdjard's policy of massive retaliation: The Arab advance upon Isfahan made Yazdjard to declare a new war on the Arabs. He summoned the governors of the provinces to send fresh troops. Though many of them were virtually independent rulers, their common danger inclined them to obey royal orders. So from the Caspian to the Indian Ocean and from the Oxus to the Persian Gulf, they rallied in vast numbers at Rai in Central Persia in 641 A.D. Yazdjard had, indeed, adopted a policy of massive retaliation against the Arab invaders. He had mustered a huge force against them. The new Persian host numbered 150,000 men, commanded by Firuzan, one of the Persian generals who fought at Qadisiya. This great army then marched towards Iraq across the ancient route from Rai to Hamadan, Hulwan and Madain. Soon he reached Hamadan and would be near Kufa, the great military camp, and then the whole of Iraq would be again in revolt.

Nu'man marches against the Persians: A new crisis confronted the Caliphate. The Caliph at first intended to march in person to meet the Persian challenge at the head of a new force of about 30,000 men he had collected. But he was again dissuaded from this project. He nominated Numan bin Muqran to command this army, who was summoned from Isfahan. Numan advanced towards Hulwan. There he received the first intelligence that the Persians were encamped near Hamadan upto which the road was clear of the enemy. Marching briskly forward, Nu'man reached Nihavand, near Hamadan, where he came face to face with the Persian horde.

Battle of Nihavand 642 A.D./21 A.H. Another mighty struggle lay before the Arabs. A huge army six times larger than their own, confronted them from behind a fortified encampment. All the odds were against the Arabs except one. In spite of their overwhelming numbers, superb equipment and great resources, the Persians lacked the enthusiasm, resolve and faith of the Arabs. Weak in numbers, the Arabs were strong in faith, and were led by the heroes and veterans of former victories over the Persians. An-Nu'man, their commander, had only recently won several victories over the enemy in South Persia. For two days, the two armies faced each other without much fighting. The Persians had safely ensconced themselves behind a deep trench and a fence of thorns and sticks. At this Tulayha, the quondam false prophet and now a devout Muslim and

an intrepid warrior, suggested a stratagem of feigning retreat so as to draw the Persians out of their safe retreat. Acting on this suggestion, Nu'man withdrew his forces in a feigned flight, with Persians giving a hot pursuit. When the Persian army had emerged from its fort, An-Nu'man wheeled round his army and attacked them from before and behind. The Persians were taken aback. A fierce engagement followed. Such a large number of Persians were killed on the battlefield that it became slippery. Nu'man's horse slipped and he was seriously wounded. But the furious struggle continued till the Persian horde was routed. Firuzan was killed. Nu'man also breathed his last, but received the news of victory before he expired.

Consequences: The battle of Nihavand shattered the ancient Empire of Iran for all time to come. The great army of Yazdjard was smashed to pieces. Thirty thousand Persians lay dead on the battlefield and another 80,000 were slaughtered in flight. Hamadan was easily taken by the victorious Arabs. Yazdjard fled from Rai to Isfahan and from there to Kirman and Khurasan. His empire was no more. He sought aid from the Turks beyond the Oxus, but to no avail. The Arabs now invaded all the provinces of his Empire and subdued them within a decade.

A series of victories followed the Arab victory at Nihavand. The Arab historians have, therefore, rightly called it *the victory of victories*. The Caliph now resolved to complete his mission of subjugating whole of the Persian Empire. He ordered Arab commanders to march against all the remaining provinces. Thus what the battle of Qadisiya had begun, the battle of Nihavand completed. While Qadisiya broke the back-bone of the Persian Empire, Nihavand administered a death-blow to it.

End of the Sassanid Empire: From Nihavand the Arabs advanced upon Rai, defended by Isfandiyar, a brother of Rustam. But the city fell into Arab arms and Isfandiyar submitted to Islam. Yazdjard was too proud to submit. He fled to the East. But all unity and cohesion of his empire was now gone. The Arab armies now advanced against the remaining provinces and subdued Faris, Kirman, Makran, Sistan and Azerbaijan. Khurasan, the last province of the Sassanids, was conquered in the early years of Uthman's caliphate. Thus the ancient empire of the Sassanids ceased to exist. The history of Asia took a new turn. The Islamic world was born. Hazrat Umar had won the last and the greatest victory of his marvellous reign.

Chapter 23

A REVIEW OF CONQUESTS AND THE CAUSES OF MUSLIM VICTORIES

The conquest of Persia concluded the first great phase in the rapid and spectacular expansion of the Islamic Empire under Hazrat Umar. Though Islamic conquests continued in the reigns of his successors, the rate of expansion was neither so great nor so quick as under Umar. Moreover, the character and spirit of the subsequent conquests of Islam were much different than under Umar.

A difficult task : A study of the nature and causes of the victories and rapid expansion of early Islam is, indeed, a difficult task. Its difficulty is due to the complexity of the problem, the rapid expansion of the early Islamic Empire, almost elemental impulses of the early Muslim conquerors, and the diversity and even conflict of opinions regarding the causes of the Musiim victories and non-Muslim defeats in these wars. "This astonishing overturn is", writes Theodar Noldeke, "when all has been said. not easy of explanation...(yet) these wretchedly armed Arabs, fighting, not in regularly organized military divisions, but by families and clans, and under leaders who never had before faced disciplined troops, after long struggle overcame Rustam and his mighty hosts (636) ; soon afterwards took the fortified capital, Ctesiphon (637); and, a few years later, by the decisive battle of Nihavand (640, 641 or 642), brought the (Persian) Empire itself to the ground. How was such a thing possible? ... Almost more marvellous are the conquests they gained on Roman territory. The emperor Heraclius was certainly the greatest man who had held the empire since Constantine and Julian. He was an astute diplomatist, a very competent general, and, as a soldier, bold even to rashness. How could it come about that he of all men was compelled to yield up to the sons of the desert the territories he had wrested back from the Persians?"[1] Our difficulty as well as our admiration for the conquest of early Muslims are increased by the fact that they waged a great war on two fronts against the Two Super-powers of the Ancient World...viz, the Sassanid Persia and the Byzantine Empire. Such are some of the questions which assail a student of early Islam.

Two Distinct Periods of Early Islamic Expansion : Before we analyse the nature and causes of the victories of early Islam, we should note a distinction between its earlier and later phases in

1. Theodar Noldeka. *Sketches from Eastern History*, pp. 74-5.

almost exactly one hundred years of Islamic conquests and expansion, from 633, which opened with the Battle of Chains under Khalid bin Walid and ended in 732 with the defeat in the Battle of Tours under Abdur Rahman al-Ghafiki. These two periods are from 633 to 653, which covered the reigns of Abu Bakr, Umar and early years of Uthman's caliphate, and the second period from 661 732, covering the reigns of the early Umayyad Caliphs from Muawiya to Hisham. Here we are mainly concerned with the first period of conquests and expansion.

Islam and Islamic expansionism : We have already considered and rejected the charge of some Western writers and orientalists that the expansion of early Islam was due to the fanatical spirit of the early Muslims to conquer and convert the non-Muslim peoples and countries to Islam. We shall not refute this charge here again. It was not Islam but Islamic State which expanded and spread over conquered lands. It was particularly so during the earlier period of Islamic expansionism under the Orthodox Caliphs. The very fact that the early Muslims offered three alternatives of "Islam, Jizya or the sword" proves that forcible converson was not a motive of conquest with them. Otherwise the alternatives would have been "Islam or the Sword". In fact, the Church Militant of Medieval Europe offered such an alternative: "Christianity or extermination" as is shown by its history from the Vikings' Scandinavia to Muslim Spain. The Scandinavians and other European peoples accepted Christianity and escaped extermination : the Muslims of Spain did not and were exterminated to the last child *ad majorem Dei gloriam* (for the greater glory of God), as the Jesuits put it. Such was the genesis of Christian Europe but not of the Islamic World, medieval or modern.

Gradual and Peaceful and voluntary Conversions of the non-Muslim People : No doubt, the early Muslim victors laid down the condition of submission to the Islamic State as the essential and binding term of peace. They were immensely pleased if an enemy submitted as well as adopted Islam. But they were not reluctant to guarantee peace, if only the enemy agreed to submit and pay tribute to the victors. Conversions came but a long time after the early conquests and due to other causes than the sword or forcible proselytism. During one century of Islamic conquests and expansion, an overwhelming majority of the non-Muslim subjects of Orthodox and Umayyad Caliphate remained true to their ancestral religions and forms of worship. Professor T. W. Arnold writes, "In the face of such facts, it is surely impossible to attribute the decay of Zoroatrianism to violent conversions made by the Muslim conquerors... the acceptance of Islam was both peaceful and voluntary ... Scanty as these notices of conversions are, yet the very fact that such can be found upto three centuries and a half after the Muslim Conquest is

clear testimony to the toleration the Persians enjoyed, and argues that their conversion to Islam was peaceful and, to some extent at least gradual."[1] Dr. E. G. Browne writes, "Three centuries after the Arab Conquest fire-temples still existed in almost every Persian province."[2]

In fact, the gradual and voluntary conversions to Islam of non-Muslim subject peoples of the Caliphate had, as we shall see in subsequent chapter, far-reaching and fundamental effects on the political and social development of medieval Islam, its polity, society's State.

Motivational Forces of Early Islam. If proselytism was not the motive force of early Islamic conquests, it does not imply that as a religion Islam played no part in its expansionism. On the contrary, it did, and in a tremendous way, which explains the difference of the nature and character of Islamic expansion from all other similar and sudden expansions of both Arab and non-Arab conquerors and empire-builders, as for instance, the pre-Islamic Arab migrations, the post-Islamic Bedouin migration of 11th Century A. D., the contemporary Germanic and Slavonic expansions, and the most spectacular of all non-Muslim expansions, viz., the Mongol irruption in the 13th Centuary A. D. The pre-Islamic Arab migrations did not expand the Arab race and tongue much beyond the borders of the Arabian Peninsula. The post-Islamic Bedouin migration into North Africa bore no historic fruits except in extensive disruption and destruction of the early Islamic culture and civilization in that vast region. The Germanic and Slavonic expansions were not only more limited in area than the Islamic expansion, but also brought the Dark Ages in Europeans History. The Mongol irruption, though geographically far more extensive and more spectacular than that of Islam, proved to be as emphemeral in duration as it was destructive and disastrous in its effects. On the other hand, Islamic expansion was more extensive, sudden, spectacular and more lasting and beneficial to the history and culture of Asia and of the world. And these differences were mainly, though not exclusively, due to Islam, which inspired the conquests and victories of its early warriors and conquerors.

First of all, Islam became the basis of unity, a rallying point and a battle-cry of the warriors and tribes of Arabia. At first few warriors and still fewer tribes responded to its call to arms. This was particularly true of the days of Abu Bakr and the early days of Umar's Caliphate, due mostly to the after-effects of the wars of Riddah. But when first victories were won, the initial hesitancy

1. T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam.* pp. 180-1.
2. E. G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 206.

vanished in the glow of religious enthusiasm and confidence. Then ever larger numbers of warriors joined the ranks of the earlier heroes and veterans of Islam.

Early Islam had a dynamic effect on its followers in more than one way. The belief in the unity of God (Tauhid), unconditional and total submission to His Will, the uniformity of social beliefs and practices which Islam inculcated among its followers, especially its teachings of social equality and social justice, the establishment of a patriarchal and polygynous family system and the belief that Islam was the last and most perfect of all religions are some of the teachings of Islam which engendered a tremendous social energy in its followers. Thus what was formerly a congerie of warring tribes was fused into a single nation of warriors and conquerors by Islamic inspiration. This national unity was based on the community of religious beliefs and practices. Finally the simplicity and austerity of early Islam attracted the simple sons of the desert far more than the rigid and complicated dogmas and rituals of other contemporary religions like Christianity, Judaism or Zoroastrianism As H. G. Wells writes, "And if the reader entertains any delusions about a fine civilization either Persian, Roman, Hellenic or Egyptian being submerged by this flood (of Islam) the sooner he dismisses such ideas the better. Islam prevailed because it was the best social and political order the time could offer. It prevailed because everywhere it found politically apathetic peoples robbed, oppressed bullied, uneducated and unorganized and it found selfish and unsound governments out of touch with any people at all. It was the broadest, freshest and cleanest political idea that had yet come into actual activity in the world and it offered better terms than any other to the masses of mankind. The capitalistic and slave-holding system of the Roman empire and the literature, culture and social tradition of Europe had altogether broken down before Islam arose. It was only when mankind lost faith in the sincerety of its representatives that Islam too began to decay."[1]

But all the Arabs were not equally imbued with the spirit of Islam. In spite of its universal appeal, most of the early warriors of Islam believed it to be a religion of the Arabs alone. Thus Islamism and Arabism were indissolubly linked together. Islamic principle of tolerance also encouraged this attitude. Non-Muslim non-Arabs were not to be compelled or persuaded to adopt Islam, if they offered to submit to the Arabs on the payment of tribute and jizya.

Decay and Decline of Persian and Byzantine Empires: The Persian Court was rotten with luxury and intrigues and weakened by endless murders and changes in the Imperial dynasty. But

1. H. G. Wells, *History of the World*, p. 329.

worse still, the whole Empire was in a state of disintegration. Its provinces had virtually broken off from the centre under their governors and commanders. A feudal anarchy had taken the place of centralised government of the early Sassanids. The Dihqans (local landlords), the Marzubans (princely magistrates or officers) and Ispahbads (provincial military governors) treated their cities and provinces as their own fiefs. So the Sassanid Empire crumbled away and disintegrated into a collection of petty states. No group or individual was capable of opposing the Arab advance. Yazdjard III, the youthful Emperor, was energetic, proud and patriotic enough not to lay down arms before the Arab invaders, but was too weak and distracted to save his Empire, in spite of his policy of massive retaliation against an enemy inferior in numbers and resources to his own. Moreover, Zoroastrianism, the State religion of the Sassanids, had become an instrument of religious persecution and oppression. The Zoroastrian priests were cruel oppressors, intolerant of all other religions and sects within the Sassanid Empire. In this cruel task, they were loyally and fully supported by the Persian Emperors. The regidity and complexity of Zoroastrian rituals and beliefs and the intolerance and persecutions of its clergy made them widely and deeply disliked, so that, as Professor T. W. Arnold writes, in many Persian subjects "persecution had stirred up feelings of bitter hatred against the established religion and the dynasty that supported its oppressions, and so caused the Arab conquest to appear in the light of a deliverance." Thus the Nestorian Christian subjects of the Sassanids, and the non-conformist Persian sects like the Manichaeans, Mazdakites and others, cruelly oppressed by their Sassanid rulers and Zoroastrian clergy, either welcomed the Arabs as deliverers or remained neutral and indifferent to the fate of the Sassanid Empire in its moral struggle against the invading Arabs. Finally, as it always happens in an era of decline and disintegration, the Sassanid rulers burdened their helpless subjects with heavy taxes and extortions, in order to replenish the exhausted treasury of a highly luxurious and extravagent court and aristocracy. With the usual pomp, luxury and splendeur of an oriental court, the Sassanids spent and squandered enormous sums on themselves and upon thousands of their concubines, courtiers, musicians and servants. Moreover, confronted with a youthful and victorious enemy the last Sassanids adopted a policy of massive retaliation and raised huge armies to fight the invaders. So they seriously drained their treasury, filled with excessive and unjust taxes on the oppressed peoples and peasantry, and exhausted by feudal anarchy and disintegration. Added to all this, the Persian Empire had fought a great war against the Byzantine for about three decades from 602 to 629 A.D. which utterly exhausted it. In short, exhausted by wars, taxation and other exactions, the country was engulfed by passions and rivalries of the feudal lords and military commanders. The royal princes

became mere pawns in the hands of rival factions and were crowned only to be assassinated within a few months. The accession of the youthful Yazdjard only postponed but did not prevent the final collapse of the empire of ancient Iran.

The picture of the Byzantine Empire on the eve of the Arab conquest was not much different. It too was rent by religious intolerance and persectutions of the Monothelite Orthodox Church. The Monophysite Christians of Syria, Palestine and Coptic Egypt suffered cruelly at the hands of Heraclius and his orthodox clergy. Moreover, overtaxation and economic oppression were the order of the day in the Byzantine as in the Persian Empire. The non-Greek merchants and peasantry in Syria and Egypt were burdened with heavy taxes and oppressive exactions both by the State and the Church. The Jews in Palestine and Egypt, who were mostly merchants and craftsmen, suffered terribly at the hands of their Christian tormentors. Finally, exhausted by the great war against his Persian rivals, Emperor Heraclius ran short of money. He planned economy. For this reason, on the one hand, he stopped paying subsidies to the Arab tribes on the Arabian borders of his Empire, which alienated them and inclined them towards joining hands with the Muslim invaders. On the other, he ordered his tax-collectors and clergy to impose fresh taxes and tithes on the non-conformist Monophysites of Syria and Egypt. Thus financial policy became an instrument of religious persecution and proselytism. All this engendered such feelings of hatred and disloyalty as to enable invading Arabs to win decisive victories against powerful and numerous Byzantine armies at Ajnadayn, Yermuk, Fihl, Damascus, Babylon and scores of other battlefields. Indeed, the overtaxed and oppressed Byzantine Syrians and Copts themselves opened the gates of their towns and cities to welcome the Arabs as their deliverers from Byzantine tyranny and taxes. The marvellous story of the Arab conquest of Syria, Palestine and Egyat is full of innumerable examples of popular welcome and felicitations to the Arab liberators. Thus according to Baladhuri, the people of Hims welcomed the Arabs when they approached it in these words : "We like your rule and justice far better than the state of oppression and tyranny under which we have been living." In contrast to the Byzantine tyranny, oppression and overtaxation, the Arabs won the hearts of their Christian subjects in Syria, Palestine and Egypt by good government, justice, toleration and freedom of worship and religion. The Arab conquerors were so partciular and punctual in fulfilling of their duties towards the "*Ahl al-Dhimma*" that when they were forced to evacuate north Syrian towns before the armies of Heraclius, they returned the polltax or jizya collected from them, for they could not guarantee them the protection or "*Dhimma*" required under the terms of treaty with them. Had they ill-treated the people of Syria or Egypt, their rule in these provinces would have been short in face of the Byzantine intrigues

and threats of invasion across the sea over which the Byzantine naval supremacy continued to exist for several decades after. "Their leniency towards the conquered," as Muir writes, "and their justice and integrity presented a marked contrast to the tyranny and intolerance of the Romans. The Syrian Christians enjoyed more civil and political liberty under their Arab invaders than they had done under the rule of Heraclius, and they had no wish to return to their former state. The Muslims, when they withdrew, returned the taxes which they had collected, since they were no longer able to fulfil their part of the bargain in guaranteeing security of life and property. A Nestorian bishop writes in the 15 A.H. (636 A.H.): "The Taiites (or Arabs) to whom God has accorded in our days the dominion, have become our masters ; but they do not combat the Christian religion; much rather they protect our faith; they respect our priests and our holy men, and make gifts to our churches and our convents.[1]

The Desert Vs. the Sown : Power of the Desert : One of the important factors which contributed its subtle but profound influence on the victories of the early Muslims was the power of the Desert. Indeed it had an important part in Hazrat Umar's strategy of war and conquest of the two mighty empires of his time. The Arab conquests and migrations under the aegis of Islam and the Caliphate were merely one of the series of tribal migrations of the Arabs of the Peninsula, which had started two or three thousand years before the rise of Islam. Such tribal migrations had occurred in the many other lands several times in the history of the anceient and medieval peoples. As such Islamic conquests and expansion were the age-old irruptions of the dwellers of the desert into the fertile and prosperous lands and kingdoms of the Sown. It was a historical phenomenon which could be easily explained by the virility and energy of the desert-dwellers, impelled by their hunger and want and the luxury and degeneration of the peoples and cultures of the Sown, ennervated by social and economic chaos and disorganization, political anarchy and religious disputes and dissensions. But the Arab expansion was unique from the migrations and expansions of the pre-Islamic Arabs or of the Germanic, Mongol or other migrations in several ways. It went much farther than many others and it ushered in an age of unique civilisation and culture to which world history owes, even today, much in science, arts and learning. Other migrations either did not last long, or did not bear fruits in human achievements under their own inspiration. Islamic conquests by the Arabs not only transformed the demographical and political geography of Western Asia, North Africa and South Europe but also blossomed into a great civilization and culture, science, philosophy and arts of Medieval Islam. These marvellous achievements

1. Sir William Muir. *The Caliphate : Its Rise, Decline and Fall*, pp. 127-8.

were due to three factors, namely, the inspiration of Islam, as we have already analysed above, the character of the Arab people born and bred in the deserts of the Peninsula and the policy and personality of the great Caliph Umar. We explain the last two factors here.

Character of the Arabs : The hard life and struggles of the Jahiliya period had inured both the Arabs of the desert and town to life of hardship, courage, tenacity, perseverance and passive endurance, loyalty and manliness. They possessed all the qualities of warriors and fighters except unity, discipline and respect for order and authority as a nation. And these shortcomings were removed by Islam and the Caliphate. The Arabs of the town, especially of Mecca and Medina and to a lesser extent of Taif, produced able administrators, brave and skilful commanders, whereas the Bedouin of the desert became courageous and hardy soldiers and warriors of Islam. Thus these two elements of Arabia's population supplemented the character-traits and qualities of each other, one supplying the commanders and generals, administrators and learned men and the other the rank and file of the Islamic armies. The phenomenal and almost unparalleled expansion of early Islam was mainly, though not exclusively, due to the wonderful qualities of head and heart of these two groups of the Arab people. Hazart Umar was fully aware of the latent powers of the Bedouins, whom he described as "the raw material of Islam" and instructed his successors; "I advise you to take good care of the desert people. They are the indegenous Arabs and the origin of Islam and you should take part of the surplus of the wealthy and give it to the poor among them."

Arab Tribalism and Islamic Victories: The victories of early Islam were in no mean degree due to the tribalism of the Arabs, their love and loyalty for their own clan and tribe. Accustomed to fight their wars in tribal groups and under tribal chiefs in the Jahiliya period and even under the Holy Prophet, the Arab armies, invading neighbouring lands, fought in clans and tribes, led by their tribal chiefs and leaders. *Asabiyah* or tribal loyalty and unity, the bane of the Jahiliya times, became a boon under the inspiration and guidance of Islam. Nevertheless, it is a sad commentary on the Arabs that they did not out-grow the restrictive and separatist features of their tribal "Asabiya" ever after. They relapsed into tribal particularism, jealousies and feuds of the pre-Islamic days during the later part of the Umayyad Caliphate. But these evil developments, which we shall analyse later, came more than half a century after the age of early conquests and expansion. During the Orthodox Caliphate, especially under Hazrat Umar, tribal loyalties and interests were completely merged with the loyalty and interest of Islam and Islamic State. It was mainly due to Islam and the wise

policy of the first two Caliphs, Abu Bakr and Umar. "Islam," writes Professor Hitti, "made full use of the tribal system for its military purposes. It divided the army into units based on tribal lines, settled the colonists in the conquered lands in tribes and treated new converts from among the subjugated peoples as clients." In so small measure, the victories of early Islam were the victories of Arabian tribalism, unified and guided by Islam. As we have said above, Islam transformed the tribes of Arabia into a nation. But this nationhood was tribalistic in content, and religious in form. It was a super-tribe, based on loyalty and allegiance to a religious community or Ummah of tribes and clans of Arabia.

Elements of Spontaneity in Arab Expansionism: One of the factors which gave to Arabian conquests and expansionism their mysterious character is the role of the camel and the date-palms and other indigenous things and conditions of Arabian society and geography. However, it gave it to the Arabian expansionism a spontaneous energy with which the Arabs burst upon the lands of the Sown. Arab character, courage and energy were spontaneously moulded by the necessary social environment and social frequency of the dwellers of the deserts, the Bedouins and the town people alike. Their character, and their restless dynamism were engendered by the tribal life, which, in its turn, was moulded by such geographical and material factors of their social environment as the barrenness of their country, where camel and date-palm were absolutely necessary for individual life and social existence. They were essential basis of Arab nomadism and tribalism, the essential factors in their social environment and necessary means of their social frequency. The Arab and his camel are inseparable, while the camel and the desert are also inseparable to each other. So thoroughly the three are linked to each other that the Arab is, as Sprengher says, "the parasite of the camel". It gives mobility to him in the inhospitable and trying environment of the desert. This fact accounted for the great victories of the Arab armies of the period of conquests, which were won, as we said above, all on the fringes of the Arabian desert and in those regions of Western Asia and North Africa which were desert or semi-desert regions. As Hazrat Umar said, "The Arab prospers only where the camel prospers." His observation was abundantly confirmed by the extent of the Arab conquests, decades after the death of the great Caliph. "The camel was a factor", writes Professor Hitti, "in facilitating the early Muslim conquests by assuring its masters more mobility than, and consequent advantage over, the settled people." The conquests of the Arabs from the days of Hazrat Umar to those of Hisham extended over such regions of Asia, Africa and Europe which were hot and arid deserts or semi-desert regions where the camel could live. But when they reached colder climates where it cannot live or the date-palm cannot grow, the Arab conquests halted as if by a magic

wand. The same is true of the date-palms. They provided the Arabs with a highly nourishing, comperatively less perishable and easily portable food, which facilitated their rapid movements against their enemies. This was also true of the Arab tent life, which enabled rapid movements. Finally, it was also true of the simple but sharp weapons of the Arabs. In short, their food, tents, camels, and weapons were far better equipments and accoutrements of war, so far as their mobility and destructive powers were concerned, than all the luxurious equipments and unwieldy weapons and implements of war of the Persians and the Byzantines. The test of a weapon of war is not its gilded edge and trappings or embellishments but its power to kill the enemy. Considered from this standpoint, the Arabs with their simple lances and arrows which the Persians ridiculed as "spindles", were better armed and equipped than the Persians or the Romans with their heavy arms and unwieldy weapons. They had perfected the practice and use of these weapons and equipment in the hard school of their desert life and its social environment and frequency. Unlike their Persian and Roman enemies, the Arabs did not drill and array themselves in regular military formations, but their social life and frequency during the wars of Jahiliya and of the Holy Prophet were their best training for the subsequent wars of conquest.

Political Centralism and Leadership of Hazrat Umar: What the warriors of Arabia required now was a socio-political unity, discipline and direction. This need was supplied by Islam, as we have said above, and by political centralism and leadership, which was provided by the Caliphs, especially Hazrat Umar. He adopted a policy of systematic conquest of the lands of the Fertile Crescent and established several administrative institutions and agencies by which these conquests were consolidated and extended afterwards. Political leadership consists in meeting the challenge and solving the problems confronting a country or a nation. Hazrat Umar met the challenge of Persia and the Byzantium successfully and solved the problems arising from his great conquests. His policy and administrative reforms fully prove his achievements and leadership. His policy of conquest was determined by two great ideals of his life, Islamism and Arabism or Arabian nationalism and was based on a masterly strategy of the desert power, the superb deployment of the natural and spontaneous superiority of the sons of the desert, the Bedouin, over the settled communities and the encouragement to Arab tribes to migrate or join the armies of Islam. His leadership was one of the most important factors in the victories and expansion of early Islam. It would be clearer still when we shall study his institutions and reforms and his character and personality.

Historical Significance of Arab Conquests : Though there was

much in common in the way the wars against Persian and Byzantine Empires opened, yet they developed and ended in quite a different way which indicate the differences between the two Empires and their challenge to the Arabs. Wars against both of them began as tribal raids. Both of them also regarded these raids as the usual incidents on their borders, accustomed as they were to Arab tribal raids for centuries past. Indeed, the Arabs, with whom they were acquainted since long, were a frontier problem to them, but not a menace to their existence. Instead, of the Arabs, they regarded each other as mortal enemies and a real menace. It is one of the ironies of history with all its dramatic effect, that what was a frontier problem turned out to be a mortal struggle for life and death of the Persian Empire and a serious threat to the Byzantine.

But with this the resemblance ends and difference begins. The Persian Empire was, in course of time, engulfed by Arab invasion and ceased to exist, but not so the Byzantine Empire. Though the Byzantines were driven out of their southern possessions, Syria, Palestine and Egypt and a little later from North Africa, they continued to possess their home provinces and European territories for several centuries more. Thus the Arabs remained to them, as they began, a frontier problem in Asia Minor instead of on the borders of Syria and Palestine. This difference also explains the reason why the Persians fought so obstinately and so long against the Arab invaders and contested almost every town and province of their Empire for more than twenty years. As compared to it, the Byzantine resistance in Syria and Palestine collapsed within four years of the invasion and within two years in Egypt. Thus within eight years from 634 to 642, the Byzantine rule collapsed in these provinces of their Empire, though continued for eight centuries in Asia Minor and beyond.

The causes of this difference lay in the geography, society and State structure of the two Empires. The Persian Empire, comprising desert and semi-desert regions, was congenial to Arab physique, character and dynamism. So were also the Syrian and Egyptian provinces of the Byzantine Empire. But Asia Minor and European possession of the Byzantines were too cold and inhospitable lands for the Arabs. And, therefore, their advance halted, as if by a magic wand, on the foothills of the plateau of Asia Minor and the Caucasus. All subsequent Arab attempts to conquer beyond these territories, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, ended in failure.

Moreover, though both empires were feudal in social structure, the Sassanid feudal society was in decay and anarchy, owing to the weakness of the Imperial government, political disintegration of the Empire, the neglect of the irrigational canals, dams and dykes on which it depended, overtaxation of the peasantry, and the ravages

caused by the enormous but unruly Sassanid soldiery. The Byzantine Empire did not suffer from such evils so much, while the core of the Byzantine feudalism, which lay in Asia Minor, was still strong and healthy. The Byzantine provinces in the highlands of Asia Minor were inhabited by great landlords and warlike peasants. They provided large armies to the Byzantine emperors and put up a stiff resistance to Arab advance through the difficult valleys and highlands of Asia Minor. Finally, while the Arabs captured Al-Madain in the initial stages of their invasion, Constantinople, the Byzantine capital, remained distant to the theatres of war for a long time to come. The result was that, in spite of many crises and vicissitudes in the Byzantine Court, the internal structure of their central government remained intact. There was no Yazdjard III among the Byzantine rulers, fleeing from capital to capital and from one battlefield to another before the onrushing Arab invaders.

Persianisation of Islam. These differences bore immense historical consequences. The total victory over the Persian Empire made Islam an eastern religion and not a western or European one, where it never secured any permanent foothold. But the vanquished Persians soon adopted Islam and introduced many Persian ideas, beliefs and customs into it. Thus in course of time Islam became Persianised to a very great extent. This was the genesis of Medieval Islam.

Why no Romanised or Hellenised Islam. Nevertheless the partial conquest of the Byzantine Empire had also its deep influence on subsequent history of the Arabs and Islam. To the early Arabs, the Byzantine province of Syria had a special attraction. And when Damascus became the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate, its Byzantine environment had a great effect on its social and political systems. The Umayyad Caliphate might well be considered as a Byzantine interlude of Islamic History between the Early Islam of the Orthodox Caliphate and the Persianised Islam of the Abbaside Caliphate. That this Byzantine interlude did not produce any lasting influence on Islamic social and political structures is mainly due to the fact that it was too short. It lasted only for ninety years, while the Abbaside rule lasted for five centuries, long enough to produce lasting effects on Muslim society, state and thought.

Islam, Arabs and Persian Shu'ubism or Nationalism. Though at first, the subject peoples of Persia, Syria and Egypt, remained jizya-paying Dhimmis, in course of time, however, they adopted Islam, and became Muslims. As such they were enrolled in the tribal structure of the Umayyad society as the Mawali. They were however, discontented with their lot as Muslims, for they were denied the equality and privileges which Islam guaranteed to its followers. Among these Mawali, the Persian Mawali became the spearhead

of Anti-Umayyed and anti-Arab movements, till they overthrew the Umayyad rule and established the Persianised Caliphate of the Abbasides. In the long run, even the Persianised Caliphate did not satisfy the nationalistic spirit of the Persiuns. They remained aliens to it. While the peoples of the former Byzantine provinces of Syria, Palestine, Egypt and even North Africa, adopted Arabism tongue and culture and Orthodox Islam, the Persians did not. The Persian nationalistic discontent expressed itself in the adoption of the sectarian Shia-ism as a reaction against the Orthodox Sunni-ism of the Arabs. Thus the Persians accepted Islamism, but rejected Arabism of the early Muslims. That is why we find today that while whole of Western Asia and North Africa are peopled mostly by the Semitic Arabs, and are Arabic-speaking in tongue and Arabian in culture, Persia or Iran of to-day is Persian-speaking in tongue and Shia in religion. This social, cultural and linguistic dichotomy of Medieval Islam had deep influence on Islamic culture and history of the subsequent centuries down to the present times. Though the great conquests of early Islam made all lands between Egypt and Afghanistan Muslim, yet the conquests of Persia and the Byzantium made them so different in many ways.

CHAPTER 24

END OF UMAR'S CALIPHATE : HIS INSTITUTIONS, CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENTS

His Institutions and Reforms :—Hazrat Umar was not only a great conqueror and empire-builder, he was also a great administrator and statesman. He established a number of political, social and administrative institutions and introduced several religious, political and socio-economic reforms, which laid the foundations of the state and society of early Islam. Umar usually, if not always, institutionalised what he saw his two great predecessors the Prophet (sm) and Abu Bakr doing or saying. These institutions and reforms lasted for a long time in Islamic History and became the ideals of Islamic State and Society in subsequent ages down to the present day. The Muslims of later ages always looked back to the Caliphate of Hazrat Umar as an ideal utopia to be re-established again. Hazrat Umar along with Hazrat Abu Bakr, became the "*Shaikhayn*"—the Two Great Masters—of the Kharijis and the Pietists of the succeeding period of schism, sedition and civil wars.

The Diwan or the Register of Pensions. The first institution which Umar established was the Diwan or the Register of Pensions for the Muslim men, women and children. It was first instituted in the year 15 A. H /636 A. D., and according to another version, in 17 A. H./638 A. D., when conquests in Iraq and Iran brought huge war-spoils to Medina. Before him the Holy Prophet and Hazrat Abu Bakr followed the practice of distributing the revenues of the State among the Muslims as soon as they were received. The revenues were then meagre and the demand was great. But with the tremendous increase in the State revenues from the spoils of war and the Kharaj and Jizya paid by the Dhimmis, the earlier practice required systematisation, and fixed principles of distributing them.

An interesting controversy arose over the question of the conquered lands before the Caliph Umar. Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, the conqurror of Iraq, wrote to the Caliph to permit him to distribute the conquered lands among his soldiers. The Caliph was against this request, but he consulted his Shura about it. Several of his advisers were in favour of distributing these lands among the Muslim conquerors. Abdur Rahman bin Auf, Zubayr and others insisted that what the Muslims had conquered should be given to them. However, the Caliph won their support to his view by quoting several verses from the Quran

which declared that the spoils of war captured by the Muslims were for them, "and for those who came after them"—"*v*" al-*dhina ja'u min ba'dihum*" (Sura 8 : verse 59). Accordingly, they accepted the Caliph's decision that "the people who had conquered the lands have a share in them but also those who will come after them, for otherwise no land shall remain for the coming generations." So the Muslims were prohibited from acquiring lands in Iraq and other provinces.

After consulting his advisors and associates, Hazrat Umar devised the Diwan or Public Register of Pensions. It was, firstly based on the principle that the revenues of the Islamic State are the share of the Muslim Community or Ummah as a whole. Secondly, each Muslim was to get his share according to his or her relationship with the Prophet, his priority in accepting Islam and, finally, his services to the Islamic State, and religion.

Accordingly, first of all, the names of the Muhajireen and Ansars were entered in the Diwan. At the top came the wives of the Holy Prophet and then his relatives of Banu Hashim and Banu Muttalib (a brother of Hashim). After them came the Ansars of Medina headed by Sa'd bin Muadh. Next came the various clans and families of the Muhajireen (the Quraysh in the order of their relationship with the Prophet and priority of conversion. Their order of precedence was affixed thus : Banu Abd Shams (the Umayyad), Banu Naufal, Banu Abd al-Uzza, Abd ad-Dar, Banu Zuhra, Banu Taym, Mukhzum, Banu Jumh, Banu Adi (the clan of the Caliph) and Bauu Sahm. Finally the names of the Arabian tribes, both Modarite and Himyarite were entered, who had participated the Wars of Apostasy and Conquest.

Next, the Caliph allocated the '*atā* or stipends of each person in accordance with the principles mentioned above. This system created various categoties of persons. Each of them had a fixed annual '*atā*, or stipend, as summarised below :—

Wives of the Holy Prophet ...	12,000 dirhams
All the "Badri Suhaba" i.e., the 313 Muhajir and Ansar Companions who had participated in the battle of Badr ...	5000 dirhams
Grandsons of the Prophet, i.e., the sons of Ali and Fatima ; and Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib, the Prophet's uncle ...	5000 dirhams
The *Halifs* (Allies) and the *Mawali* (Clients) of the *Badri Suhaba* were also assigned ...	5000 dirhams

Converts and warriors of the battle of Ohud; and also those who enjoyed the special favours of the Prophet ...	4000 dirhams
Converts between the Ohud and conquest of Mecca ; and also those who fought against the apostates in the Wars of Riddah	3000 dirhams
Converts during the Conquest of Mecca	2000 dirhams
Sons of the Badri Suhaba	2000 dirhams
Warriors of the battles of Qadisiya and Yermuk	2000 dirhams

Then followed the general categories of the Arabian tribes, the *diwan* or records of which were kept in their respective provincial headquarters or garrison-towns. The annuities (*'atā*) given to each of them were, as below :

The Yemeni tribes of the South ...	400 dirhams
Warriors of note and distinction	1000—1500 dirhams
Warriors of the battles after Qadisiya and Yermuk	300—600 dirhams
Non-categorised persons ...	200 dirhams
Wives of the Ansars and Muhajireen	200—400 dirhams
Women and Children of the Muslim warriors	100-300 dirhams
Slaves of the Muslim warriors	60 dirhams
Even new-born babies	10 to 60 dirhams

A few years later the Caliph, in view of the increase in the revenues of the State, revised and raised the stipends of the lower categories. For instance, the weaned children received 100 dirhams each and still later the requirement of weaning was abolished altogether. The freed slaves, the Mawali, of the Muslim warriors were assigned 300 to 400 dirhams each. He also assigned 100 dirhams each to the wives and children of the soldiers either fallen in battle or engaged in active service. Such was the care and solicitude of the great Caliph for feeding and clothing the entire Muslim population of the State.

The Diwan was first instituted in Iraq and later extended to Syria, Egypt and Persia as they were conquered. The Arabs were forbidden to own lands in conquered provinces for, as Umar said, they were to devote themselves to soldiering and defence of

the Empire and not to become agriculturists, and thereby neglect their military service. The Dhimmis or non-Muslim subject were left in possession of their ancestral lands in order to provide revenues to the Muslim warriors and rulers. If a Dhimmi adopted Islam, his land was distributed among his non-Muslim relatives or kinsmen who became responsible for the payment of his share of the Kharaj to the Bayt al-Mal, so that the revenues might not decline. But the new Muslim was to receive his share of pension from the Bayt al-Mal. As very few non-Muslims adopted Islam in the days of Hazrat Umar, their conversion did not create any problem at that time, as it did in the days of the early Umayyad Caliphs. The Caliph also banned the Quraysh from migrating and settling in the conquered provinces, lest their demand for a share in the provincial Bayt al-Mal might lessen the share of the early conquerors and settlers and provoke the jealousy and ill-will against the Quraysh. This salutary restriction was, however, lifted by his successor, Hazrat Uthman, with tragic consequences, as we shall later describe. Here it is enough to remark that these restrictions demonstrate Hazrat Umar's profound knowledge of Arab character and his deep sense of justice, impartiality and equality for all Arab tribes.

Cadastral Survey of Iraq : In order to assess the land-tax or Kharaj in the newly conquered province of Lower Iraq, Hazrat Umar ordered its cadastral survey. The cultivable land was measured, the fertility of its soil, the availability of water, etc., were determined and the amount of the land-tax was accordingly assessed. The peasantry was relieved of the excessive taxes imposed by their former Sassanid master. The great network of canals, etc. neglected by the former rulers, was repaired or dug anew.

Bayt al-Mal and the Diwan : The Diwan of Pensions was a system of disbursement of the public funds, collected in the public treasury of the Caliphal State, called *Bayt al-Mal*. Originally, it was devised as a system of distributing the war-spoils, *al-ghana'im*, in a more regularised manner than before. But it was soon extended to all the incomes of the Caliphal State, namely *jizya*, and *kharaj* from the Dhimmis and the revenue from the al-Fay or crownlands of the Caliphal State. Thus the Bayt al-Mal or public treasury was treated as the property of all the Muslims and not of the government of the Caliph, much less of the Caliph himself, as it is the case in a monarchy, and as it became under the Umayyad, and still more so, under the Abbaside caliphs. The Diwan prescribed the shares of all the Muslims in the Bayt al-Mal on the basis of certain well-defined principles. Thus under the Diwan system, the Caliph was regarded as a trustee of the public revenues of the State or Bayt al-Mal, not as its master. He was accountable to the general mass of the Muslim

ummah for every penny collected or the smallest piece of cloth deposited with it. This was, indeed, the high standard of public accountability of the public funds which Hazrat Umar upheld during his caliphate. But it came to be increasingly neglected by the Umayyad and the Abbaside caliphs, as we shall see in subsequent chapters. In fact, the whole history of the early and medieval Islam revolves around the issues of Bayt al-Mal and its disbursement.

Historical Significance of the Diwan : Diwan of Pensions of Hazrat Umar was, indeed, a land-mark in the history of Islam. "By its novelty and important consequences", writes Von Kremer, "this political institution stands out as one of the most conspicuous land-marks not merely in the Islamic but in history as a whole." It was, as Muir says, "a spectacle probably without parallel in the world."

Institutionalisation of the Prophet's Sunnah. By instituting his Diwan, Umar continued the Sunnah of the Prophet and Abu Bakr. To this extent, it embodied the spirit of Islam as taught by the Quran and practised by the Holy Prophet. It was the practice of the Holy Prophet to distribute State-revenues such as the Zakat, Ghanimah, etc., among the people on the basis of equality and brothehood of all the Believers. Hazrat Abu Bakr continued this practice during his Caliphate. What Umar did was to institutionalise the practice of his two great predecessors. The reasons which necessitated the change were the great increase in the revenues of the Islamic State and the mass conversion of the Arabs of the Peninsula. They would have relapsed into apostasy if they had seen the fruits of their hard-won victories appropriated by the chosen few. It required order, and, method in the distribution of public money. The Diwan, in turn, created political and social unity and harmony among the Arabs.

Its Islamic Spirit. The Diwan of Umar was based upon what we may call the "socialism" of early Islam. Its pensions and benefits were for all the Believers on the principle of equality and brotherhood. Though several defects crept into it later on, it must be said to the credit of Hazrat Umar that he devised his Pension System on the principle of equality of all Believers, whether Arabs or non-Arabs, free or slave, full-blooded Arabs (Sarih), half-blooded Arabs (Halif) or the clients (Mawali), etc. Such was the socialism of early Islam which inspired him. He would have all Muslims treated alike without distinction. When a governor discriminated against the Mawali or the non-Arab "new-Muslims", by refusing to grant them the same pensions as the Arabs, the Caliph wrote to him, "It is wicked in a man to despise his brother Muslims." He instructed that the non-Arab converts, like the Persian landlords and the Christians, be assigned

pensions like the Arab Muslims. In short, "the decisively democratic and socialistic conception of the original Islam lay at the basis" of Umar's Diwan.[1]

The Pension System of Hazrat Umar produced great changes in the social and political life of the early Muslims. It influenced the growth of the Islamic Empire and society for a long time to come.

A basis of the unity and stability of the Islamic Empire: It created unity among the Arabs and stability in the Islamic Empire. A people so unruly, so tumultuous, and so prone to internecine quarrels and feuds as the Arabs, would have fallen out among themselves over the distribution of the revenues of the State they had built with their swords if the Caliph had not instituted a fair and orderly distribution of these revenues among them. If he had accepted the request of his commanders and apportioned the conquered lands among his commanders and soldiers, the whole history of Islam would have been different. Islamic Empire would have split up, at its very inception, into petty kingdoms of the victorious chiefs or leaders of the one or the other commander or tribal chief, with the rank and file of his army or tribe as his followers. Even the principle of the priority of conversion had a pacifying effect on their arrogant and hungry spirits. When the Caliph was assigning the shares of the various categories of stipendaries, the Quraysh leaders, proud of their noble birth, declared "We know of no one nobler than ourselves and we shall not take less than others". "Not so" said the Caliph, "I give them by priority of faith and not for noble birth." The Quraysh leaders were satisfied: "It is well". they said, Moreover, the principles of equality and fairness fastened the loyalty and allegiance of the Arabs to the Islamic Empire, which stood the test of two civil wars and innumerable disputes, revolts and schisms among them during the next two centuries or so. From this fact arose the idea of the unity of the Muslim World which lasted long after its earlier political unity had become a thing of the past. In short, it fostered the idea of the Islamic World-State, which inspired many Muslim conquerors and empire-builders afterwards, though none of them achieved it.

A nation of warriors—the Muqatila: The Pension System of Ḥazrat Umar, coupled with his instructions forbidding the Arabs to take to agriculture or to own lands in the conquered provinces, transformed them into a nation of warriors devoted to a life-long military service for the defence and extension of the Empire. Thus every male Arab became a soldier, fed, clothed and maintained by

1. Von Kremer, *Orient Under the Caliphs* p. 74. Trans by S. Khuda Bakhsh.

the State for the purpose of life-long soldiering in the service of the Caliphate. In this way the Arab tribes became the "Muqatila" or the standing army of the "fighting Arabs". "Rank and stipend now assigned, and even rewards for special gallantry in the field, descended by inheritance." Thus Umar harnessed the energy of the Arab tribes into the service of Islam and the Islamic Empire. He was the builder of an army of the Arab tribes that became the most powerful force in the world for a couple of centuries to come. It shattered the Persian Empire, drove out the Byzantines from Western Asia and North Africa and hurled itself far into Europe. The Arab Bedouins were the backbone of this tribal army, led and commanded by the Quraysh and to a lesser extent by the Ansars and the chiefs of the tribes. The Pension System of the Diwan was its essential basis. It organised the Muqatila as nothing else could have. The Muqatila became the military organ of the new type of society, based on the politico-economic relations between.

Tribal Feudalism of the Diwan: The economic system which maintained the Muqatila, the tribal army of the Caliphs, was the tribal feudalism, created by the Diwan of Hazrat Umar. It was a State Feudalism, in which the conquered lands in the provinces were held in trust by the State for the Arab tribes and their descendants who had conquered them and shared their produce and wealth as determined by the Pension Register. The Caliph forbade the conquering soldiers and commanders to acquire the lands of the conquered peoples who were to be left in possession of their ancestral lands on the condition of paying Kharaj or land-tax and Jizya or personal tax.

This decision, coupled with the condition that the non-Muslim land-owners would pay Kharaj and Jizya, which were to distributed among the Muslims on the basis of the Pension System of Hazrat Umar, established the tribal feudalism. It was feudal in the sense that the produce of the land was utilised to maintain a military force and tribal in the sense that the income of these lands was meant for the conquering tribes and their descendants and not for private estate-owners, as in feudalism proper. The ownership of the land was vested not in private individuals but in the State, acting as a trustee on behalf of the Arab tribes *in perpetuum*. This sort of feudalism satisfied the Arab people, for its purpose and spirit was egalitarian which inspired its foundation, the Pension System of Umar.

Contradictions of the Diwan System: Neither Hazrat Umar nor anyone among his successors ever realised the contradictions and inconsistencies in the Diwan system, as a method of distributing the revenues of the Bayt al-Mal. They rendered the Diwan to be an unstable and inhibitive institution.

Firstly, it provoked rivalry and civil strife among the Arabian tribes, which had settled in the newly conquered provinces, especially among those that had settled in Kufa and Basra (Iraq) and Syria.

Secondly, it caused social stratification and class distinctions among the Arabian tribes of both the settled provinces and of the Peninsula itself. It produced a feudal class of ashrāfs or those stipendiaries who received *atā* of 3000 dirhams or more a year. This tendency, however, conflicted with and nullified the principles of brotherhood and equality of the Muslims, on which the Diwan system was based.

In fact, these principles were in their nature inhibitive and regressive of social and economic development and progress of the Islamic society. They tended to make Islamic society tribalistic, while it tended to become feudalistic. The early Muslims failed to realise that the equality, brotherhood and social justice of the Diwan system, which became the ideological nostalgia with the latter Muslims, were due to its super-tribalistic structure. This structure, however, crumbled to pieces under the pressure of increasing social stratifiction into rich and poor tribes, families and, individuals which engendered rivalries and civil strifes among the Arabian leaders and tribes for large estates, vast possessions and great riches.

Thus the Diwan system hindered the economic and social development and growth of the Islamic society by inhibiting the tremendous energy and dynamism of the early Muslims from hard work and productive labour, because it enjoined them to life-long soldiering and endless warfare. Had there been no such inhibition and diversion, Muslim energy and dynamism would have been devoted to husbanding the productional resources of their farms and fiefs and to enhancing the productivity of their cultivators and labourers by inventing new tools and techniques, implements and instruments, and means and methods of production. With these developments, the early Muslims would also have cast off their tribalist customs, habits and institutions, which would have ushered in a new developing society. Instead the Diwan system made the early Islamic society regressive, inhibitive, strife-torn, and disintegrative.

We shall now analyse in greater details these forces and tendencies of disintegration, and inhibition of the Diwan system.

The Arabian tribes, represented by their Caliphal State, and their non-Muslim Dhimmi subject peoples. We call the new social order as tribal feudalism of the Diwan was, in course

of time, found to be unstable and difficult to maintain. It was subjected to several forces and pressures, under which its original spirit of equality and fairness could not be preserved. In fact, the tribal feudalism of Umar was bound to become either more tribal or more feudal, for its two elements were inconsistent and contradictory. Tribalism is essentially a collective way of life with communal ownership, while feudalism is an individualistic way of life with personal ownership. Hence they led to two divergent developments in the Arab Empire soon after Umar's death, which made it difficult to preserve his Diwan within its original spirit and purpose. These developments were the feudalistic tribalism of the Arab tribes, especially of Iraq, which sought to reserve the rights and privileges of the Diwan to themselves alone, and the big feudalism of the aristocracy of the Quraysh and others, based on the *Qati'a* fiefs in the *Fay* or the Crown-lands of the Caliphate.

The Growth of Arabism; In spite of Umar's instructions, his Pension System lost its original principles of equality and brotherhood of all the Believers. It became, instead, a monopoly of the people of the Arab race. The Register of Pensions became, so to say, a closed register in which the names of the "new Muslims" of non-Arab races were not entered at all. The Arab tribes were too arrogant and too race-conscious to admit the Muslims of non-Arab blood, the Mawali as they were called, into the benefits of the Diwan. Their Arabism or their pride of Arab race tended to make the tribal feudalism of the Diwan more tribalistic than feudal, and also to destroy its democratic and egalitarian spirit.

"Closed society" of the Arabs. Owing to their pride of race and blood, the Diwan of Umar fostered the growth of a "closed society" among the Arabs, from which the non-Arab Muslims were excluded, so far as the rights, benefits and privileges of the State were concerned. It lost its Islamic spirit of equality and brotherhood of all Believers. The State lost its Islamic character, and became an "Arab Kingdom" under the Umayyad Caliphs. The forces of this change, Arabian pride of race and blood, their arrogance and their avarice, were already at work, but they came to the surface during the Caliphates of Uthman and Ali. Had these Caliphs acted with the sternness and impartiality of their great predecessor, they could have held them in check. But they did not, as we shall see in subsequent chapters. The result was that the society of early Islam was transformed into a "closed society", in which the Arabs constituted the privileged and dominant class or even caste, holding themselves aloof from the subject races, Muslim or non-Muslim, who were meant only to produce wealth and luxuries for the ruling class. The socio-political ascendency and privileges of the Arabs had far-reaching effects on the later history of Islam. When the Arabian "closed society" was destroyed with the downfall of the Umayyad Caliphate, it was

replaced by the Persian "closed society" of the early Abbasides and then by the Turkish "closed society" of the later Abbasides. In fact, all later Muslim empires and kingdoms of the Middle Ages were "closed societies", based on the privileges and rights of the ruling classes or tribes, as the case may be.

Internal Stratification of the Arabs. More immediate effects of the Arabization of Umar's Diwan was the internal stratification of the dominant Arab people themselves. As would be clear from a perusal of its categories, the Diwan divided the Arabs into two main sections, namely, the more privileged classes, called Ashrāf, whose stipends varied from 2000 to 5000 dirhams and the bulk of the less privileged Arab tribes whose shares varied from 200 to 600 dirhams. This fact created two levels of aristocracies, viz., the greater aristocracy of the Quraysh, who headed the Ansars and Muhajireen and other highly privileged persons, and the lesser but more numerous aristocracy of the Arab tribes. Both these privileged sections were at one with each other as against all other peoples of the Empire, Muslims or non-Muslims, when it was a question of defending the monopoly of their rights and privileges under the Diwan, but they quarrelled with each other when it was a question of getting more or less of these rights and privileges among themselves. In both cases there were resentments and jealousies, struggles and disputes among the Arabs *inter se* and among the Arabs and non-Arabs, resulting in revolts and civil wars, of which the post-Umar history of Islam was full. Had his successors continued to grant the pensions and other benefits of Umar's Diwan to the Mawali or to the new converts by allocating to them shares in accordance with the egalitarian spirit which inspired Hazrat Umar, the whole history of Islam after Uthman would have been different. No "closed society" of the Arabs would have then arisen, to be overthrown by that of the Persians, Turks and others. What is more, the original purpose of Umar—viz., the making of the Muslims into a nation militant, organised for the task of propagating Islam—would have been achieved by ever-increasing circles of new converts and new conquests. But the aristocracy of the Quraysh, headed by the Umayyads, to a greater extent, and by the aristocracy of the Bedouin tribes, to a lesser extent, prevented such an evolution of the Islamic State and society. Instead of it, they clashed with each other over the question of the "Fay" lands, which proved to be the undoing of the system Umar had built.

Undoing of the Tribal Feudalism. The tribal feudalism of Umar could not be preserved without constant improvement and extension, for it was exposed to several forces of disintegration. We have already mentioned some of the political, social and racial elements of disruption. A few more may also be mentioned here. The Pension System of Umar was organised on the assumption that the

tribute-paying Dhimmis would remain non-Muslims. But when increasing numbers of them embraced Islam, it caused many financial troubles for the rulers, the Umayyads, and produced popular resentments among the new Muslims. This was the first sign of the breakdown of Umar's Diwan. Another defect was the deterioration in the character and conduct of the Arabs, the ruling race. They were meant to be a nation of warriors and conquerors. They remained so for a couple of generations. But they gradually became a nation of idlers and ease-lovers, immersed in the pleasures and luxuries and incited to endless quarrels and feuds to which, being a tribal people, they were so prone. Thus their "idle society" prompted them to insensate rivalries and quarrels, which disrupted their political and governmental system. The love of ease and luxury also weakened the growth of a strong military and political leadership among them, so necessary to maintain the Empire and the society their forerunners had built. Another disrupting force was the rapid growth of their population. The polygamous Arab tribes multiplied so fast that the revenues of the Bayt al-Mal, from which were derived the pensions and provisions of the Diwan, could not keep pace with their type of "population explosion", to express the rapid growth of their population in the jargon of the neo-Malthusians of today. It necessitated the development and improvement of the agricultural and other economic resources of the Empire. But the overwhelming majority of the Arabs had little or no understanding of this problem. It must, however, be said to the credit of the some of the early Umayyad rulers and administrators that they had such an understanding to some extent. Here again Hazrat Umar had shown them the way. They tried to develop the feudal side within the context of Umar's Diwan by building canals, dams, etc. But it required far greater and more persistent effort and energy than they put into it. Thus the Diwan became an inhibitive and disintegrative force, as we shall see, during the Umayyad rule.

In short, the Pension system of Umar became an unbearable burden on the revenues of the Bayt al-Mal, a hindrance to the growth of a sound economy, a bone of contention and a proflic source of resentments, rivalries and feuds among the Muslims and non-Muslims, Arabs and non-Arabs of the latter Umayyad Caliphate. At last, it became a dead letter under the Abbasides.

Other Reforms : The Caliph also initiated several other reforms in the religious, military, social and juristical spheres of the Islamic State. He instituted the Islamic Calendar from the year of the Prophet's Migration to Medina. Hence it came to be known as the Hijrah era. It was a lunar calendar, beginning from the first of Muharram of the year of Migration. He appointed "teachers" and Qazis in the provincial towns, settled by the Arab tribes, to instruct them in the principles of Islam and adjudicate

their disputes according to the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet. When on a pilgrimage to the Ka'ba, he found it too narrow to accommodate the ever-increasing numbers of pilgrims, circumambulating around it. He compelled the owners of the houses around the Ka'ba, to sell them. These houses were demolished and the open space around the Ka'ba was enlarged. Though the owners of these houses murmurred, but the prestige and influence of Hazrat Umar was too great for them to resist him. The Caliph founded new cities, like Basra, Kufa and Fustat, established military districts or *junds* in the conquered provinces, stationed troops in cantonment-cities, organised military forces of men and horses to be ever ready to march against every enemy or rebel, and sent intelligence agents in the provinces to report to him the day-to-day conduct of his officers and keep a watch on the events in their stations. Thus he established a firm but just administration in all the conquered provinces.

His Governors : Hazrat Umar was singularly careful in the selection of his commanders and governors. His choice was determined not by family relation and tribal affinity or by the social position and wealth of the officer but by his merit, ability, piety and devotion to the welfare of the Muslims. He kept a strict watch over his officers, both as regards the discharge of their duties and their incomes during their tenure of office. In order to check enrichment at the expense of the people or by embazzlement of the State funds, he prepared an inventory of the possessions of a new appointee. If it was found that he had amassed more wealth than he had at the time of his appointment, the Caliph punished him either by confiscating the surplus or by dismissing him. So great was the awe and prestige of Umar that none dared to disobey his orders.

The Caliph instructed his governors to be particularly devoted to the well-being and contentment of the Arabs and the Dhimmis over whom they were appointed. He dismissed or recalled an officer against whom the inhabitants complained and the complaint was proved to be true. In this respect the restless people of Kufa and Basra had already become forward. Their complaints brought about several changes of his governors during the last years of Umar's caliphate. These changes are mentioned here not only to show the nature of Umar's administration but also to indicate what was in store for his successor, Hazrat Uthman.

Kufa : Sa'd bin abi Waqqas was the first governor of Kufa till 642 A. D. But then the Bedouin jealousy began to work against him. He was accused of unfairness in distributing the booty. They accused him before the Caliph on various charges, who dismissed him. In his place, the Caliph appointed Ammar

bin Yasar, a former slave in Mecca in the early days of Islam. Though second to none in faith, he lacked tact and administrative skill and ability. On the complaint of the people, the Caliph replaced him by Abu Musa al-Ashari. But he too failed to satisfy them. The Caliph then sent Mughira bin Shu'bah, who was a strong ruler. He held the factions in Kufa in check for two years. Thus within a short period of two years there were four changes.

Basra : The sister-city of Basra was more populous. restless and factious than Kufa. It was jealous of Kufa, for its population was greater but resources lesser than those of the latter. The Caliph granted its inhabitants increased allowances in order to equalise the benefits of the two cities. But that did not in any way lessen the restless and factious spirit of its Bedouin inhabitants. At the time of its foundation, Utba bin Ghazwan was its governor. He won victories in Khuzistan against the Persians. But he died soon after. The Caliph appointed Mughira bin Shu'bah in 638. He was soon deposed on a false charge, which was not proved due to the lack of four witnesses. The Caliph appointed Abu Musa al-Ashari in his place. The people of Basra at once complained against him to the Caliph of luxurious living. The charge was not proved. But it shows that unscrupulous inhabitants of Basra were ready to take undue advantage of Umar's solicitude and concern for their good government.

The unruly and factious people of Kufa and Basra could be restrained from doing mischief by an impartial and just ruler, like Umar. He was both firm where firmness was needed and lenient where leniency would do. This, indeed, became a problem for the successors of Umar, as some discerning minds had noticed. Abu Ubaydah rightly remarked, "Umar's firm government has made things difficult for his successors. If they will be as stern as he, the people will disobey them, and if they will be lenient as he, they would murder them." Several other tendencies also portended tragic ends for his successors. These were the growing jealousy of the Bedouin and the town-Arabs, the increasing riches and luxuries for the Arab settlers in conquered provinces, the end of active military service, after the initial period of conquests was over, and the increased leisure for the pension-receiving Arab masses. But so long as Umar lived, his strong hand kept all thess restless forces in check.

Death of Hazrat Umar. November 3, 644. It was the tenth year of his glorious Caliphate. The Caliph, though sixty-three years old, was still vigorous and healthy. He would have ruled for several years more but for an assassin. His end was as sudden as it was unexpected.

Medina had became crowded with Persian prisoners of war and slaves. Among them were Harmuzan, the former Persian satrap of Khuzistan, but now settled in Mecca after adopting Islam, and Firoz, a slave of Mughira. He was a native of Nihawand, whose capture by the Muslims only two years before he deeply though secretly resented. Perhaps other slaves and captives conspired against the Caliph, though there is no proof of such a conspiracy. Nevertheless, Firoz and Harmuzan were seen hob-nobbing with a person only a day or two before the former assassinated the Caliph. One day, Firoz approached the Caliph and complained that his master, Mughira, charged him two dirhams a day for his labour, which was too much. The Caliph enquired about his work. Firoz said that he was a carpenter and a black-smith. "You are a good craftsman and two dirhams a day are not a heavy charge, "said the Caliph, and added, "I have heard that you can make wind-mills. Make one for me." "If allowed to live," replied the Persian slave. "I shall make a wind-mill for you whose frame shall reach the farthest end of the world." Firoz then went away. The Caliph remarked that the slave had threatened him, but paid no more heed to him.

Next morning, the Caliph came to the Mosque and placing himself at the head of the congregation, led the morning prayers. When he knelt, Firoz, who had posted himself behind the Caliph, rose and stabbed him six times with a poisoned dagger. Then he ran amock and wounded several others till he was overpowered. But he killed himself with his dagger. The Caliph was severely wounded in the stomach and carried home in a precarious condition. Treatment was impossible, for whatever medicine was given to him, it oozed out of the stomach wound. Knowing his end was near, the Caliph asked Abdur Rehman bin Auf to be nominated as his successor. But he declined the offer. At this the Caliph nominated a board of six leading Companions to elect a Caliph within three days of his death. After making these arrangements, Hazrat Umar breathed his last on November 3, 644 A. D./26. XII. 25 A. H. He ruled for ten years, five months and twenty-one days.

Umar's Character : We have traced above the achievements of Hazrat Umar, his great conquests, his just and firm administration, his impartiality and fair treatment, his deep sense of duty and responsibility for the people he ruled. Here we shall dwell upon not his achievement as a ruler but as a man, although he was, as Ameer Ali says, "the greatest and the most powerful ruler of the time."

Umar ibn al-Khattab was a leading personality of Mecca at the time of the rise of Islam. Though he was then a young man

of barely twenty-five he impressed his contemporaries by his towering height, his magnetic personality, his magnificient powers both as an orator and a diplomat. In the Ukaz fair, where the stalwarts of the Quraysh and of the whole of Arabia used to assemble, he could outmatch anyone in wrestling, in oratory and in his knowledge of Arab tribes and traditions. He was a man of fiery temper and vigorous habits, which few could oppose or challenge. When Islam rose, he became, for the first six years, its staunchest opponent. But when he accepted Islam, he soon proved to be a pillar of strength. The Muslims hailed his conversion with a loud cry of joy and the Holy Prophet conferred upon him the celebrated title of "al-Faruq"—the distinguisher of Faith from falsehood. He at once became one of the closest associates and chief Companions of the Prophet. He fought in all the battles of the Prophet and participated in all the affairs and problems confronting him, in his characteristically vigorous and even tempestuous manner. But his counsels were as weighty as his manners were vigorous and his words categorical. Once convinced of truth, he minced no words and brook no compromise. But his long and close association with the Prophet and with Abu Bakr, softened his fiery nature, deepened his powerful mind, broadened his vision and strengthened his faith. In short, Islam made him a great man before he became a great ruler and a great conqueror. The responsibilities of office mellowed his temper, for he had a deep sense of justice, a kind heart, a profound solicitude for the well-being of his people and a strong sense of accountability for his government before God. His talents for good government were as great as his capacity for self-scrutiny, his devotion to duty and his feeling for justice. "To no person, ever since the dawn of History, has the appellant 'great' been more deservedly conceded by posterity than to Caliph Omar". Some of his great qualities of head and heart are highlighted here below.

His simplicity : Though Umar became the greatest Sovereign of his time yet he remained as simple, frugal and unostentatious in his dress, food and in the manner of his daily life as before. In fact, he retained all his life the patriarchal simplicity of an Arab Shaikh, which endeared him to his people. "He walked with bare feet," writes Taqari, "using both hands (for he was ambidextrous) to draw round him a red embroidered cloth." Though more powerful than the Chosroes of Iran and the Caesars of Rome, yet no door-keepers and no curtains, no body-guards and no court hid him from the common people into an awe-inspiring and inaccessible majesty. It frequently happened that a foreign visitor or an unacquainted host would ask the people, "Where is the Caliph ?" And to his utter surprise he would be told that he was standing before him, unrecognised in his simple and homely dress, or lying in a corner of the Mosque of Medina under a coarse

sheet of cloth after the noon-prayers. He possessed one sheet and one mantle, both patched in various places, darned by his own hands when worn out. He slept on a bed of palm-leaves and was attended even on State journeys by a solitary slave, with whom he exchanged places on the camel-back and the leading string alternately.

His Sense of Personal Responsibility : Though a mighty ruler, he was not a stern master. "Simplicity and duty," writes Muir, "were his guiding principles, impartiality and devotion the leading features of his administration." He had a sense of personal responsibility for the welfare of his people and his accountability for it to God. As he himself said, "By him who sent Muhammad with the Truth, if a single camel were to die of neglect on the banks of the Euphrates, I should fear lest God should call the family of al-Khattab (i. e. himself) to account for it." He said on another occasion : "God please, if I live another year, I shall visit my people in all the provinces, staying for two months in Syria, then for another two months in Mesopotamia, then for two months in Egypt and then for two months in Bahrayn, for two months in Kufa and finally for two months in Basra and by God I will spend the whole year for the well-being of my people ; for I know that they have wants which are cut short before they reach my ears and the governors do not bring the wants of the people before me while the people do not reach me." In fact, his sense of responsibility weighed sometimes so heavy on him that he was heard exclaiming : "Oh that my mother had not borne me. I wish that I had been this blade of grass instead." It was this sense of duty which made him to walk through the streets of Medina at night in order to succour any man, woman or child in distress or need. He often acted as a an policeman keeping watch over the life and property of his people at night.

His Ideals of Good Government : It was one of Umar's ambitions that his administrators were equally solicitious for the welfare and happiness of the people over whom he had appointed them. On the appointment of a governor, he would instruct him : "You must not ride on horseback, nor eat white bread, nor wear fine clothes, nor set up a door between you and the people." When he bade fare-well to a new governor he would say, "I have not appointed you over the people of Muhammad (God bless him and grant him peace !) that you may drag them by their hair and beat them, but in order that you may lead them in prayer, and judge between them with justice and distribute the public money amongst them with equity. I have not made you their master. Do not flog the Arabs lest you humiliate them and do not keep them long on foreign service lest you tempt them to sedition and do not neglect them lest you render them desparate."

He allowed the people to freely complain against his governors, whom he punished by recall or dismissal, and in case of an act of tyranny, even by flogging. It may, however, be remarked that the frequent changes of his governors and administrators in face of popular demand weakened the government, especially when he was succeeded by personalities weaker than his. Indeed, it needed an Umar to succeed an Umar. It was his sense of justice and devotion which made him at once loved and feared by his unruly Arabs. "Umar's whip," they said, "is more terrible than another's sword."

His strictness towards himself and his family : Umar was a hard task-master, but towards himself. He rigorously scrutinised his behaviour as a man and his conduct as a statesman. He spared himself no pains and subjected himself to all privations in order to fulfil his responsibilities of State. When a great famine spread in Hijaz in 639, the Caliph, with characteristic self-denial, refused any indulgence not shared by those around him He swore that he would taste neither meat nor butter, nor even milk, until the people had food enough and to spare. He carried flour on his own back to the houses of the needy and the distressed. Once when his servant obtained a skin filled with milk and another with butter at a very high price, he gave them in alms. "I shall not eat," he said, "that which costs so much. Thus I shall know the hardships my people suffer." Owing to his strict rations of coarse bread and olive oil, the Caliph, who was naturally red and fresh in countenance, became pale and lean during the days of the famine.

Umar enjoined the same strict conduct upon his family members, who lived the same frugal and simple life as he did. He would forbid them to do what he had forbidden himself and the people. "I have forbidden the people," he would say to his family gathered around him, "to do so-and-so. Now the people look to you as birds look at flesh, and I swear by God that if I find any one of you doing this thing I will double the penalty against him."

His self-scrutiny and strictness would make him to subject himself to the same punishment as he would mete out to others. Once a Bedouin came to him to seek redress from an officer who had oppressed him. The Caliph, in a fit of anger, inflicted a number of stripes on him, but soon after repented of his act and asked the Bedouin to inflict the same number on him. But the Bedouin refused. The Caliph was afflicted more by his refusal than he would have been by his stripes. "O Ibn al-Khattab," he cried to himself in anguish, "humble thou wert and Allah hath elevated thee; astray, and Allah hath guided thee; weak and Allah hath strengthened thee. Then He caused thee to rule over the necks of thy people, and when one of them came seeking thy aid, thou didst strike him! What wilt

thou have to say to thy Lord when thou presentest thyself before Him."

Government by Criticism and Consultation; The Caliph was accessible to the humblest of his subjects on all occasions. He was open to criticism by everyone young or old, man or woman, Arab or non-Arab. He conducted the business of the State by consultation and advice. His policy was made after discussion among his advisors, his orders were issued after consultation, his officers were appointed after enquiry among his associates and companions. Every person could freely question and criticise every act of the Caliph. An old woman once asked the Caliph how it was possible for him to make his shirt he was wearing when his share was only half of what was needed to make it. The Caliph told her that he asked his son to give him his share to make the shirt.

The Ideal Ruler of Pristine Islam: "So died Omar, next to the Prophet the greatest in the kingdom of Islam; for it was all within thirteen years that, by his wisdom, patience and vigour, the dominion was achieved of Syria, Egypt and Persia." He was an ideal Caliph, an exampler for all great rulers of Islam ever after. The Holy Prophet founded the Islamic Republic of Arabia, Abu Bakr saved it from destruction at the hands of rebels and apostates and Umar enlarged it into an Empire by his conquests. In a real sense, the Orthodox Caliphate came to an end with his death. In view of the Age of Troubles that followed soon after his death, we may say with Ibn Khallikan that "the good fortune of Islam was shrouded in the grave-clothes of Umar ibn al-Khattab."

1. Sir William Muir, *The Caliphate: Its Rise Decline and fall*, p. 190.

UTHMAN : 644—656 A.D./23-35 A. H.

THE AGE OF TROUBLES BEGINS

CHAPTER 25

ELECTION AND CONQUESTS OF UTHMAN

His Election: The third Caliph, Hazrat Uthman, was elected to the Caliphate in quite a different manner than his two predecessors. As we have said above, the dying Umar, finding no one of his choice among his associtès, appointed a board of six electors to choose his successor. They were Ali, Uthman, Abdur Rehman bin Auf, Zubayr, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas and Talha. The last named was not present in Medina at the time of Umar's death. So the decision was taken by the remaining five to which Talha gave his consent when he arrived a little later. Umar had co-opted his son Abdullah bin Umar with the Board of Elector, but forbade him to be himself a candidate for the Caliphate. He was to vote only in case of a tie. Umar realized fully that secrecy and speed in choosing his successor were imperative lest the impatient people might resort to trouble and thereby imperil the unity and stability of the Empire. He, therefore, gave instructions to the electors to finish their task within three days of his death. He ordered Miqdad bin al-Aswad to convene the meeting of the Electors in the Treasury-room and compel them to come to a decision. If anyone still opposed the majority decision, he was to be beheaded. Abu Talha Ansari was to guard the door of the Council Chamber with a party of the Ansars.

So the Electors met after Umar's death. Each one of them pressed his claim to the caliphate. For two days they hotly contested against each other's claim till a near-stalemate was reached. However, during this time it became clear that only two of the Electors had any chance of being accepted as Caliph. They were Uthman and Ali, representing two Qurayshite factions, Umayyad and Hashimid respectively. Both had nearly equal claim to the Headship of Islam. Confronted with the stalemate, Abdur Rehman bin Auf resolved it by offering to withdraw himself from the contest and to become an umpire between the claims of Uthman and Ali. All agreed to his offer. Abdur Rehman spent the third day and night in busy consultations with the other Electors, and the leading citizens of Medina and of the provinces who were visiting the Capital after the pilgrimage. His enquiries revealed to him that the consensus of opinion favoured Uthman's claim. Among his fellow-electors, Sa'd and Zubayr also favoured Uthman's election.

When the fourth day dawned—the last according to Umar's instruction—the issue still hanged in the balance. No decision was yet taken. People were assembling in the courtyard of the Mosque with expectant and anxious looks. The Electors were still closeted. Abdur Rehman had not slept all night, conversing and consulting the people. Bad blood threatened to break out among the people assembled. The partisans of Hazrat Ali, Ammar bin Yasar and Al-Miqdad loudly asked Abdur Rehman to nominate him as the next Caliph. But Uthman's supporters, Abdullah bin Abi Sarh and Abdullah bin Rabia pressed his claim. Hot words were exchanged between the two parties.

Thereupon, Abdur Rehman rose, hushed the parties and addressed a question to both the candidates in turn. "Do you," he asked Ali first, "agree that, if elected, you will bind yourself by the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of the Prophet and the precedents of Abu Bakr and Umar?"

"I hope to do so," replied Ali and added; "I hope to do so according to the best of my knowledge and ability."

Then Abdur Rehman put the same question to Uthman, who replied simply, "Yes I will."

Upon this, Abdur Rehman raised his face towards the heavens and, taking the hands of Uthman in his, saluted him as Caliph. The people followed him with promptitude and took the oath of allegiance at the hands of the newly elected Caliph. For a moment Ali hesitated. But when Abdur Rehman reminded him of his word to abide by his decision, he too rushed forward and paid homage to Uthman. Thus was the third Caliph elected.

Owing to the tragic events of the later years of Uthman's Caliphate, his election became the first great controversy of early Islam, causing dissension and disunity, schism and sedition during subsequent ages of Islamic history. In view of the later controversy, doubts and aspersions were cast on the *bona fides* of Abdur Rehman as an umpire. Even charges of Umayyad intrigues and machinations were made. But they are all false and malicious. Abdur Rehman bin Auf's decision was prompted by honesty, sense of duty, patriotism and trust, and fortified by the consensus of opinion in Uthman's favour. During two hectic days and nights he found that the majority of the people of Medina, whether the Companions, the citizens of Medina or the visiting personalities from abroad, supported Uthman's claim to succession.

The question is : why did the people favour Uthman as against Ali? Many reasons are given. It is said that the great age of

Uthman, who was then nearly seventy years, made him acceptable in the eyes of the people. Arabs are inclined to favour age to youth. Ali was then about forty—a very raw age in the eyes of the Arabs, among whom seniority in age counted much. What is more, people expected that Uthman would not live long and then Ali would have his chance. Uthman was very popular among the people for his munificence, his services to Islam and his close relationship with the Prophet, being the husband of his two daughters, hence entitled "Dhu'l-Nurayn". Moreover, an unexpressed sentiment might well have influenced them. They knew the mild and gentle nature of Uthman and sought a relief from the stern and strict days of his predecessor. The growing luxuries and comforts among the Arab inclined them towards an easier and rosier way of life. Like Umar, Ali too was reputed for his strictness. Lastly, at the time of his election, nobody could foresee the sad disasters of the reign and administration of Uthman, least of all Abdur Rehman, who died a few years later, long before the troubles began to brew up against the Caliph. For the first few years of Uthman's Caliphate the affairs of the Islamic Empire proceeded in the same way as they did under Umar.

Conquests of Uthman

During the early years of the Caliphate of Uthman, the momentum of Muslim victories continued in all directions as before. Muslim armies conquered new lands in the east, north, west and south, and also for the first time in Islamic history on the high seas. These conquests constitute a brilliant chapter in the history of the third Caliphate.

Conquests in the East: We first turn to the east. Six months after Uthman's election, a serious rebellion broke out in Persia from one end of the country to another. It was incited by Yazdjard III. Persia was under the control of the governor of Basra. Uthman had dismissed Abu Musa al-Ashari from this post and appointed his youthful cousin, Abdullah bin Amir in his stead. Though only twenty-five years old, Ibn Amir was a brave soldier and an intrepid general. He marched against the Persian rebels in southern and central Persia and quickly suppressed the rebellion. He then despatched his lieutenants against the yet unconquered Persians provinces in the remote east along the borders of South Asian subcontinent. He himself advanced upon Khurasan, where the fugitive Yazdjard still lurked. He captured Nishapur, the capital of Khurasan and subjected it to a tribute of a million dirhams. The Persian King fled towards Merv, which was also taken in 30 A. H./651 A. D., on the payment of a tribute of 13 lakh dirhams. The unfortunate Yazdjard fled across the Oxus, to seek the help of the Turks beyond the river. Ibn Amir captured Tus,

Sarakhs and finally approached Khawarizm on the lower reaches of the Oxus, where he won a great victory He then returned to Basra with 40,000 captives in his train and visited Mecca for thanksgiving.

In the meanwhile, his lieutenant continued to advance in several directions. Ahnaf bin Qays advanced on Balkh, the capital of the principality of Tukharistan, which accepted to pay tribute to the Caliph. Another Arab chief, Rabia bin Ziyad advanced upon Sistan and subdued it. Majasha bin Masud subdued Kirman. At last the Arabs reached as far as Herat, Kabul and Ghazna and defeated and subdued the Buddhist chiefs of these towns. At the same time Arab armies captured Tabaristan and Azerbaijan on the Caspian Sea.

The Arab control over the outlying territories was not yet fully established when the civil war broke out among them after the death of Uthman. That is why these principalities regained independence and had to be reconquered in the days of Muawiya.

Death of Yazdjards the last of the Saassnids : While these splendid conquests were made. Yazdjard fled from place to place, seeking aid from the tribes and rulers of the Far East, but to no avail. At last, one day in the eighth year of Uthman's Caliphate, 652 A. D., he was killed by a miller in whose hut he had taken shelter. His royal diamonds and jewels incited the avarice of the miller who killed him for this purpose. Thus died the last of the Sassanids. His death contributed towards the final pacification of the Persians, who had now no king left to fight for.

War against the Byzantines. There was also trouble in Syria. Umar had appointed Muawiya as the Governor of Damascus after the death of his brother, Yezid, in the plague of Amwas. As the governors of other Syrian districts died, their areas were also placed under Muawiya. So when the last of them died, Uthman also placed his area under Muawiya's authority. Muawiya thus became the sole Governor of Syria, which office he held with great tact and firmness.

Muawiya was an energetic governor and enterprising soldier. He waged war on his Christian neighbours, the Byzantines. In the second year of Uthman's Caliphate, the Byzantines invaded Syria from the north with a large army. Muawiya was short of men. Fresh troops were consequently despatched by the Caliph. Muawiya took the offensive and drove the invaders out of Syria. He did not stop at the borders, but pursued the enemy into Asia Minor. The Muslims overran Asia Minor and reached Armenia in the north near the Caucasus. They captured Tiflis and reached the Black Sea. Then the army turned towards the Caspian and joined with

another Muslim force in Tabaristan. These victories revealed the weakness of the Byzantine defences in Asia Minor. Thenceforward, hostilities between the Muslims and the Byzantines were renewed in summer. One year Muawiya himself lead an expedition and reached almost near Constantinople. But his real achievement was to initiate naval war against the Byzantines, described hereafter.

Wars in Africa. In the west also the enemies of Islam renewed fighting after the death of Umar. The Byzantines endeavoured to regain Alexandria. They had still the control of the sea. In 646 A. D., with the support of their navy, they landed a large force at the port of Alexandria, which they captured. But the Caliph despatched a force under Amr ibn al-As, who defeated the invaders and re-captured Alexandria.

Change of Governors. Soon after his victory over the Greeks, Amr ibn al-As was dismissed from governorship. A dispute arose between him and the Caliph over the appointment of Abdullah bin Abi Sarh as the Chief Tax-Collector, while Amr was left in control of the army alone. He refused to relinquish control over the finance and administration. "My position will then be," as he wrote to the Caliph, "like one who holds the cow by its horns while another milks it." The Caliph dismissed Amr from governorship altogether and appointed Abdullah bin Abi Sarh in his place. However Amr's dismissal made him to join the increasing numbers of the critics and mal-contents against the Caliph. Nevertheless, Ibn Ali Sarh's choice was good, for he soon proved himself an able administrator and a bold general. He had already shown his ability in the days of Umar, who had appointed him to the Government of Upper Egypt. He had advanced against Nubia (modern Sudan) and subdued extensive territory. He now turned his skill against the Greeks on a larger scale both on land and at sea.

Conquest of Barqa. Abdullah bin Abi Sarh marched against the Byzantine possessions in North Africa. He advanced upon Barqa and Tripoli. In a battle fought near Carthage, he inflicted a defeat on a large Greek host under the command of Gregory, the Greek governor of Carthage. Warned of the large numbers of the enemy, the Caliph sent reinforcements, which included many Companions and citizens of Medina and Mecca. After a bitter fighting, the enemy was defeated with great slaughter. A large booty was captured, including many women. But a dispute broke out over the distribution of the booty. The Caliph was accused by this critics of permitting his foster-brother, Abdullah bin Abi Sarh, to purchase the royal fifth for five lak dirhams.

Naval war against the Byzantines. The most brilliant conquest of Uthman was the naval victory, the first of it kind in early Islam.

He was the first ruler in Islam who undertook naval operations. Hazrat Umar had a dislike for the sea. A number of disasters had befallen the first attempts of the Muslims to fight at sea. Al-Ala, the Governor of Bahrayn had crossed the Persian Gulf in ships. But his expedition was a total failure, for the Persians cut off his retreat by capturing his ships. Similarly, a naval expedition across the Red Sea against Abyssinia ended in disaster, when the Muslim boats were swept away by a storm. These disasters gave Umar a distaste for the sea. He consulted Amr ibn al-As, his governor of Egypt, who gave him a rather frightful description of the sea. According to him, "the ships look like little logs of wood, with men clinging to them as insects stick to a floating piece of wood. They are at the mercy of waves which threaten to engulf them any moment." Umar, therefore, forbade Muawiya who had sought his permission to send an expedition across the sea against Greek possessions in the Mediterranean.

After Umar's death, Muawiya renewed his request to his successor. Uthman had no such reluctance to distrust the sea. He gave him his sanction, but laid the condition that maritime service was to be voluntary. Muawiya raised a fleet and placed it under the command of Abu Qays, the first naval commander in Islam. He attacked the island of Cyprus, off the Syrian coast in 649 A. D. The Cypriots submitted to the Muslims on the condition of paying the same tribute as they had paid to the Greek Emperor. The Arabs, however, did not hold the island for long. Abu Qays led several other expeditions against other Greek islands in north-eastern Mediterranean.

Battle of Alexandria : 655 A. D. Since the conquest of Syria and Egypt, the Byzantine navy had constantly harassed Muslim towns and ports on the coast of these provinces. Once they had incited a revolt in Syria and, on a later occasion, they landed at Alexandria. In or about 655 A. D. the Byzantines again assembled a large fleet of 500 vessels and threatened to attack Arab possessions. The Caliph commissioned Abdullah bin Abi Sarh to meet the challenge of the Byzantine navy. He collected as many ships as he could from Egyptian and Syrian ports and sailed from Alexandria against the Byzantine fleet. The two fleets met each other off the coast of Alexandria, where the first great naval battle was fought. The Arab fleet was much smaller than the Greeks, but the Arab soldiers aboard were better fighters. They spent the night before the battle in prayers, while the Christians also kept up the din with their bells. Next morning the sea was calm. Soon the two forces came to grips with each other. In the fashion of naval warfare in ancient times, the rival ships came side by side and the soldiers aboard jumped over to the other side and started hand to hand fighting. After a terrible slaughter, the Greeks were

routed. Many of their ships were burnt or sank and the remainder fled away to Syracuse in Sicily.

The Arab victory at Alexandria was splendid and momentous. It shattered the naval supremacy of the Byzantines in eastern Mediterranean, removed the constant danger of Greek incursions into Syria and Egypt and made the Arab navy supreme. The Arabs now became a sea-faring people. Soon the Byzantines were swept off the waters of the eastern Mediterranean, This shift in the balance of naval power proved to be decisive in the Arab-Byzantine military struggle in North Africa. For nearly two decades the Byzantines had successfully held up Arab advance along the coast of Africa, due to their command of the sea. They could easily and safely send reinforcements to their armies in North Africa by sea. But when the Arabs became the masters of the Eastern Mediterranean, their navy prevented the Byzantine reinforcements and protected the advance of their own armies. Thus the road to Arab advance in North Africa was opened. As soon as Muawiya restored peace after his civil war with Hazrat Ali, he renewed the advance into North Africa, The Arabs soon wiped out all traces of Byzantine rule in North Africa.

Increasing Unpopularity of Uthman. But his victory near Alexandria did not increase the popularity of the Caliph. The Arab commanders complained against him for favouring Abdullah bin Abi Sarh, their governor and admiral. "The Caliph had made a man admiral whom the Prophet had proscribed to death," they said. At this juncture, discontent against the policies of the Caliph came to the surface. His critics began freely and publicly to accuse him of favouritism and nepotism. Though Muslim arms continued to win victories in the east and west, their attention turned more and more towards Kufa, Basra, Fustat and Medina, where malcontents and rebels were, at first secretly and then openly, rising against the Caliph. Early Islam stood at the threshold of the first civil war in its brief history.

CHAPTER 26

CAUSES OF UTHMAN'S UNPOPULARITY

Constitutional Crisis of Early Islam : The undifferentiated socio-political system of Early Islam was confronted with a serious political and constitutional crisis. Was the sovereign head of State punishable for his real or alleged failure to guarantee the well-being and contentment of his subjects ? Islam and the traditions of the Holy Prophet and of his two successors, Abu Bakr and Umar, had upheld the principle of personal accountability of the rulers to the ruled. To the tribal people of Arabia political obligation was strictly personal and contractual in nature. If the head of State failed to create conditions of welfare and happiness of his subjects, they were not bound to obey him, but could even depose him. This was the unwritten constitution of early Islam. To the nomadic people, a State was matter of person-to-person relationship between the chief and his fellow-tribesman whose authority is obeyed only if the chief exercises it for the equal good of all his followers Umar came upto this standard of nomadic conception of political obligation. But many events, acts and policies of Uthman failed to give the same impression about his administration. How far was this impression valid and the discontent genuine ? Had Uthman really fallen below the tribal notions of the duties and responsibilities of a Caliph ? Was he really oppressive and oligarchic ? Did he actually try to foist the Umayyad domination over the Islamic Empire ? Did he favour his own kinsmen ? These are some of the questions which we have to tackle here. They have been asked and answered in many ways for centuries past and have been the source of dissension and schism in Islam since long. For us, it is necessary to study and analyse them with historical objectivity, neutrality and impartiality.

Early Islam had no constitution. It knew only a set of rules and customs regarding the choice of the head of State and his duties and responsibilities. But even they were not clearly enunciated and consistently upheld. It was the custom of the Arabs to choose their tribal chiefs by a small group of the leading figures in the tribe. This choice was then confirmed by the "*bayt*" or oath-taking at the hands of the chief-designate. The "*bayt*" implied not only personal and contractual relationship between the chief and his tribesmen, but also a day-to-day responsibility of the chief to ensure the security and well-being of his tribe by his leadership on the battlefield and his tact and wisdom in the settlement of tribal affairs. This kind of political headship and

responsibility worked marvellously well upto the days of Hazrat Umar. His conduct of the State was like that of a tribal chief holding himself responsible for the well-being and happiness of his multitudinous people. But a change had come over the Republic of Medina. It had grown far larger in size, numbers, resources and responsibilities than any Arab tribe, however large. In spite of it, the political notions of the Arabs remained the same to which they were accustomed in their daily tribal life. They still believed that the Khalifa at Medina must provide for the personal happiness and welfare of his subjects in the farthest corners of his vast Empire. Their belief was strengthened by the fact that Hazrat Umar did so. When, threfore, Hazrat Uthman did not come upto the standard of impartiality, solicitude and equality of his predecessor, he was accused of falling short of his official responsibilities. Gradually these accusations turned into charges and finally into sedition and revolt in three out of four important provinces of the Empire. A chain of events, then, followed which ended in the martyrdom of the Caliph. The whole crisis was basically constitutional. But it was conditioned, as all constitutional crises are, by economic, political, social and religious movements, and forces.

Growth of the new "Qatai" Feudalism : Hazrat Umar had established a system of tribal feudalism which endeared him to his nomadic warriors and settlers in conquered provinces. It embodied both the principles of equality and notions of public weal and happiness, so valued by a tribal people. Under his Register of Pensions each Arab warrior was ensured an income. Excluding a few persons, who were given 5,000 dirhams a year, or more, the overwhelming bulk of the Arabs were allocated shares between 300 to 2,000 dirhams. This was a farily equal compensation, a proof of equalitarianism which characterised the administration and policy of Hazrat Umar. Moreover, he had imposed restrictions upon the Arab settlers in the provinces against acquiring land and agricultural property. Furthermore, he had banned the migration of the aristocratic Quraysh to the newly conquered provinces, in order to ensure that the shares of the early warriors and settlers in the Bayt al-Mal were not affected.

When Hazrat Uthman became the Caliph, he gradually but increasingly abolished all these salutary restrictions. He allowed the Arabs to acquire landed properties in the provinces. He lifted the ban imposed on the Quraysh and permitted them to settle in the conquered provinces. Above all, he allotted lands and estates, called *Qati'a*, to many people, Quraysh and others, in various parts and provinces of the Empire. Even in this respect, Uthman did not do anything new. Umar and Abu Bakr and the Prophet, had also allotted Qati'a-estates to various persons. But such cases were

very few and far between. Uthman, however, granted many more than his predecessors. Thus a new aristocracy arose in the newly acquired provinces. It was enriched by the immense spoils of war and by the new feudal estates they had now acquired. The Qati'a lands constituted a direct loss to the public treasury, the Bayt al-Mal, for these lands did not pay Kharaj as the lands of the non-Muslim Dhimmis did. So, the advent of the new aristocrats in the new towns of Iraq or Egypt, who were often Qurayshites, gave a cause of grievance to the earlier settlers against the Caliph. They were aggrieved by the fact that the lands which they had conquared with their swords and the *atā* or share which they got from the Bayt al-Mal under the system of the Diwan of Umar, were threatened by the aristocratic policy of the new Caliph. Their grievances, when unheeded by the officials of the Caliph, turned into resentment and discontent against his system of government.

Uthman's Predicament. Had Hazrat Uthman been a strong man, endowed with the qualities of a resolute political leadership, he would have successfully suppressed these grievances and complaints. The crisis which he confronted was neither new nor exceptional. It had occurred in all great tribal migrations and settlements in world history. The development of the new feudalism, the Qati'a feudalism, based on personal ownership of land, was indeed inevitable. The equalitarian tribal feudalism of Umar could not last long. It could not ensure the proper utilisation of the economic resources of the newly conquered provinces. It was only by encouraging the occupation and exploitation of the barren, deserted or Dhimmi lands in the provinces that their resources could be properly developed. But this development was bound to engender fears and resentment among the earlier settlers. To meet the consequent discontent, the Caliph must have adopted a strong policy, in order to accustom the people to new attiutdes towards the State. The nomadic attitude of personal and contactual allegiance had to be replaced by a non-personal and coercive allegiance. But Hazrat Uthman, by his own nature and experience, was not capable of bringing about this change. It was achieved by Muawiya and his Umayyad successors afterwards. However, he did earn all the blame and ill-will for quitting the method and policies of Umar and undermining the traditions and examples of his predecessors.

The Bedouins Versus the Quraysh. The crisis of the old tribal and the new Qati'a feudalism manifested itself in the form of the antoganism between the Bedouin tribes, on the one hand, and the aristocratic Quraysh tribe, on the other. In a sense, this antoganism was not new. It existed even in pre-Islamic days. But it was now much different from the old. The mercantile community of pre-Islamic Mecca excited only the jealously of the poor nomadic

tribes around it, and nothing more. But the new landed aristocracy of the Quraysh excited the antogonism of all the Arab tribes, by acquiring lands conquerred by them and by holding all important offices, civil or military, in the government of the Empire. Hazrat Uthman had lifted the ban on Qurayshite migration and settlement in the provinces. Large numbers of the Meccan and Medinese families went to the provincial towns where they acquired lands, gardens and even *atā* in the Bayt al-Mal. and held important offices. Naturally, the former settlers deeply resented the coming of these families and blamed the Caliph for abolishing the restrictions imposed by his predecessor. Moreover, although the Bedouin tribes were no doubt as unruly and restless as ever, yet they were no longer the hungry, destitute and unorganised desert-dwellers as they were before the rise of Islam. They were now the Muqatila, the fighting Arabs, organised for war and conquest, dwelling in or around the garrison-cities or towns amid increasing prosperity, where their numbers constantly multiplied at a very rapid pace. Islamic teachings of the equality of all believers, their early victories and the equalitarian system of Umar made them all the more resentful and discontented with the Caliph. This discontent found its greatest expression in the new cities of Basra, Kufa, and Fustat, which spearheaded the opposition to the government of Uthman. The unruly, factious and disobedient spirit of these cities had already given troubles to Hazrat Umar, who had to change governors frequently in Basra and Kufa. But under his weak. mild and vacillating successor, they became seditious and rebellious, especially when he appointed his own kinsmen and fellow Qurayshites to governorships and other offices in Iraq.

Internal Quarrels of the Quraysh. Had the Caliph rallied around him the undivided support of the Quraysh and the new aristocracy of the citizens of Medina and Mecca, the Ansars and the Muhajireen, he could have suppressed the factious and unruly Bedouin elements in the provinces. This was exactly what his own kinsman. Muawiya, had done in Syria, which remained quite peace ful and loyal to him during all the troubles against the Caliph. And this was which Muawiya was to do later throughout the Arab Empire, at the end of his war against Hazrat Ali. But Hazrathis Uthman failed to win the support of the Quraysh because of favouritism and nepotism towards his own the Umayyad clan. It aroused the jealousy of the rival faction of Banu Hashim, and the suspicions of the early converts of Islam, who constituted the Orthodox sections among the Muhajireen and Ansars. The Quraysh tribe was split up into three factions, Umayyads led by Uthman, the Alides, headed by Ali, and the Orthodox, consisting of the surviving Companions and their sons and descendants. "*Silla rahmi*" or preference for kinsman was deeply rooted in the hearts of the Arabs. But Uthman's weakness for his kinsmen became an

obsession. He showered great favours on his Umayyad kinsmen, with the result that, in a short time, a number of the most important and profitable offices were in their hands. Yet these Umayyads, though able administrators and brave leaders, were exactly those people who had opposed the Holy Prophet and Islam tooth and nail and submitted only when the victory of the new faith became inevitable. They appeared, therefore, in the eyes of all the early and strict Muslims as "forced converts", who adopted Islam only for wordly gain. The nepotism of Uthman appeared to them as the worst political back-door intrigue to bring the Umayyads into power in the new Empire of Islam, as they had in pre-Islamic Mecca. The Caliph denied such allegations. But the Orthodox sections among the Quraysh and Ansars, supported by the masses of the people, refused to believe him.

All these charges were really to cover the nomadic love of centrifugal separatism and their dislike of centralised and strong administration, which the Umayyad governors were establishing in the provinces. The Caliph gave colour to these charges by refusing at first to dismiss his Umayyad kinsmen so long as opposition was peaceful, but then weakly submitting to popular clamour when it assumed a violent form. Had the Caliph rallied the loyal elements among the Quraysh and other aristocratic elements in the Empire and suppressed his critics and opponents in the provinces with determination, he would have nipped the troubles in the bud. But his weak, mild, wavering and gentle nature, so laudable in an ordinary citizen, proved disastrous for him as a ruler, who must be guided by the principles of centralism and leadership. Weakness is, indeed, the first sin of politics. Hazrat Uthman was too gentle, too mild, too wavering to ride the storm rising against him.

At this critical juncture, Arab arms ceased to win victories on the borders of the Empire. The Arabs had reached more difficult mountainous regions in the east, north, west and south, as the desert regions were practically occupied. When new victories ceased, the spoils of war also stopped to come in. The revenue of the Bayt al-Mal decreased, while the demand for more pensions increased, as new settlers, Qurayshite and others, reached the conquerred provinces. The gentle but weak Caliph was unable to restrain the Muqatila from revolting. He was besieged in his own house and fell a martyr to the rebels' swords.

CHAPTER 27

MARTYRDOM OF HAZRAT UTHMAN

According to the Arab historians, every act of the Caliph and every event during the last six years of Uthman's Caliphate gradually but inevitably increased his unpopularity and troubles and ultimately ended in his martyrdom at the hands of the rebel armies of Kufa, Basra, and Egypt. But the origin of his troubles could be traced from the very beginning of his Caliphate.

Changes of Governors

Kufa: As we said above, Hazrat Umar had appointed Mughira bin Shu'bah as governor of Kufa. But he was soon dismissed by Uthman on his accession. He reinstated Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, as he said, according to the last instructions of his predecessor. A dispute broke out between Sa'd and his treasury officer, Abdullah bin Masud. Sa'd borrowed some money from the public treasury, but did not pay it in time. Ibn Masud insisted upon prompt payment, upon which hot words were exchanged between the two. The factious people in Kufa ranged themselves part on the side of the governor and part on that of his treasury officer. When the news of this dispute reached the Caliph, he recalled Sa'd from his post within a year of his appointment. In his place, he appointed Walid bin Uqba. Walid was a young and brave warrior. But he was a kinsman of the Caliph, being his uterine brother and the son of a man, who was captured in the battle of Badr and put to death by the orders of the Prophet as a rabid opponent of Islam. All these past events were now raked up by the faction in Kufa to blame the Caliph for dismissing a renowned Companion like Sa'd and appointing a kinsman compromised by his past. For some time, however, Walid bin Uqba won the support of the people of Kufa by his vigorous compaigning on the borders But at last the hostile faction became angry with him when he justly punished a murderer. They accused him before the Caliph of drinking wine and conducting public prayers in intoxicated condition. In proof of their charges they produced the signet-ring of office, which, they said, they had removed from his finger when he was unconscious with drink. Though no legal proof was given of drinking, Uthman recalled him to Medina. In his place he appointed Said bin al-As. He was also another young relative of the Caliph. His father too had been killed in Badr, fighting against the Muslims. Though an enterprising warrior, Said was an inexperienced administrator. Finding the people of Kufa factious, arrogant and seditious, he used strong

words against them, threatening to punish them for their lawlessness and mischief mongering. For this purpose he invited the Qurayshite nobility to come and settle in Iraq, which incensed the people all the more. "One Qurayshite succeeds the other as our governor," they said, "the last no letter than the first. It is as if we have fallen from the frying pan into the fire." A wave of discontent and opposition spread among them, which provided a fertile soil for the conspirators and rebels to incite them against the Caliph. For some years, however, Said managed the affairs well by diverting the attention of the people to wars abroad. In the end, however, the hostile faction got an opportunity to drive out the governor from the city.

Basra: In the sister-city of Basra, matters deteriorated in the same way. Abu Musa al-Ashari was the governor of Basra at the time of Uthman's accession. He used to lecture the people to lead a hardy life. But when he set out upon an expedition, the factious people were surprised to see their governor riding to the front in pomp, with ample luggage, carried on forty mules. "Give us these animals to ride upon," they said, "while you set us the example of going on foot." Then they repaired to Medina and complained to the Caliph of Abu Musa's favouritism towards the Qurayshite migrants, and tyranny over the Arab tribes. Again the Caliph, instead of reprimanding them, accepted their unfounded charges and dismissed Abu Musa. In his place, he appointed Abdullah bin Amir to the governorship. He too was a young cousin of the Caliph, albeit an intrepid general. As we have described above, he suppressed the rebellion in Persia and extended the frontiers of the Empire by successfully launching campaigns in the East. But he displeased the people by filling the local offices and the commands in Persia with his own favourites. Once again the people held the Caliph responsible, as subsequent events showed.

Egypt: Amr ibn al-As, the conqueror of Egypt, was its governor when Uthman became the Caliph. Early in his reign. Amr foiled the Byzantine attempt to regain the lost province in 645 A.D. In spite of it, a dispute began between Amr and one of his subordinates, named Abdullah bin Sa'd bin Abi Sarh. He was made a commander in Upper Egypt by Hazrat Umar. Being an enterprising soldier, he pushed his arms against the Nubians in Upper Egypt and annexed large territory in Nubia (now called Sudan). When Uthman became Caliph, he appointed Abdullah bin Abi Sarh as the Chief Treasury Officer of Egypt. This appointment highly incensed Amr, who refused to "hold the cow's horns" as he called Egypt, while another milked her. He indignantly threw away the command of Egyptian troops and repaired to Medina and complained to the Caliph against his unfair treatment. Uthman replied by appointing Abdullah bin Abi Sarh as the supreme commander as well. As we have noticed above, Abdullah bin Abi Sarh was an able administra-

tor, for he increased the revenues of Egypt, a courageous general and the first great admiral of Islam. But for all his victories, his appointment increased the unpopularity of the Caliph. He too was a kinsman of the Caliph, his foster brother. Worse still, Abdullah bin Abi Sarh had the bad repute of a renegade. He had accepted Islam before the fall of Mecca, and was employed by the Prophet to write down the revelations. But once he tempered with what he wrote and, when discovered, fled to Mecca where he apostatised and satirised the Prophet. On the fall of Mecca, he was proscribed to death as a renegade but was let off by the Prophet on Uthman's intercession. Now, when Abdullah bin Abi Sarh appropriated a part of the royal fifth as his personal share from the booty captured near Carthage, the Caliph was blamed for favouring his kinsman who was a former renegade. His splendid naval victory only served to increase to odium against the Caliph for appointing such a man to be the admiral of the fleet which included several Companions and other devout citizens of Medina. The Caliph was also blamed for allowing Merwan, another of his kinsmen and his secretary, to appropriate the remaining royal fifth of Carthage when it was brought to Medina. Later the Caliph explained that they had purchased it. But no one believed him.

Syria: Syria, originally placed under four commanders, was now placed under the sole charge of Muawiya bin Abu Sufyan, another Umayyad kinsman of the Caliph. It must be remembered, however, that Muawiya's appointment was made by Umar, who chose his governors for their ability and skill, which Muawiya possessed to a conspicuous degree. He held the province firmly by his wise policy of rallying the loyal and aristocratic elements from among the Quraysh and other tribes. Syria remained a haven of peace and order throughout the troubled reign of Uthman, while discontent, sedition and intrigues beset all other provinces of the Empire.

Domestic Events in Medina and Mecca. As fate would have it, several events occurred in Medina and Mecca, which increased the unpopularity of the Caliph, although he could not be held responsible for them. Indeed, they were for the real good of the Muslims.

Standardisation of the Quran : 651 A. D. As we noticed above, Hazrat Abu Bakr had the original copy of the Quran entrusted to the care of Hazrat Umar before his death. Umar entrusted it to the custody of his daughter, Hafsa, on his death-bed. During Uthman's reign, a controversy began over the correct recitation of the holy text, for Arabic pronunciation varied in different tribes and places. The Arabs of Iraq, following Abdullah bin Masud, asserted that their recitation was correct, while those of Syria, following Miqdad bin al-Aswad, claimed their

recitation more authentic. When the controversy reached the ears of the Caliph, he consulted his advisers and decided that an authentic text, based on the copy in Hafsa's custody, be issued as the standard text for all. Accordingly, copies of the original text were prepared and despatched to the provincial headquarters. At the same time all other manuscripts were called in and put to the flame to prevent future controversy. Abdullah bin Masud refused to accept the standard text and declared his own as the authentic one. The factious people of Kufa took up his plea and accused the Caliph of tampering with the holy text. The charge was absolutely groundless. On the contrary, it was a laudable act of faith on the part of the Caliph, which preserved the purity and correctness of the Quran.

Enlargement of the Court of the Ka'ba : 647 A. D. Another pious act of the Caliph also increased his unpopularity. It was the enlargement of the court around the Ka'ba, in 647 A. D., which Hazrat Umar had commenced. The owners, whose houses were demolished, raised a hue and cry against the compensation. The Caliph complained, justly, that they had submitted quietly to the same thing by his predecessor, but raised the hue and cry against him. However, they also joined the growing ranks of the detractors and critics of the Caliph. Certain changes in the ceremonies of Hajj opened the Caliph to the charge of innovation in matters of religion. The affair was unimportant, but was magnified by his critics into an impermissible innovation. During the pilgrimage in 653 A. D., the Caliph pitched a tent for shelter during the Mina halt and added two more series of prostrations and prayers at Mina and Arafat. When asked whether he had the examples of the Prophet and of his two predecessors for doing so, he replied that he had done it on his own will. At this the Companions objected and a popular outcry was raised against the Caliph. Thus the troubles of the aged Caliph multiplied from year to year.

Treatment of Abu Dharr al-Ghifari : 651-53 A. D. A change had come over the Arabs since the days of the Holy Prophet. They were no longer so poor and penurious, as they were before. The great conquests had made them the masters of immense riches, acquired both by booty and taxation. They dwelt in the rich and prosperous lands of the Fertile Crescent. A class of the *nouveau riche* had sprang up—the new aristocracy of Islam. It rolled in immense wealth, possessing vast number of slaves, lands, palaces, gardens, horses and precious stones and metals. Many of them possessed palaces and mansions in all the important towns of the Empire,—Mecca, Medina, Damascus, Kufa, Basra, etc. Some of them owned a thousand male and female slaves each. Among them were several Companions. Along with the riches, luxuries and amusements, pomp and show in dress and food and such other evils crept into the social life of the Arab, especially of those who had

settled in Syria and other conquered provinces.

Some of the Muslims looked upon the growing luxuries and riches with horror. They regarded them as un-Islamic and against the simple and abstemious teachings and practice of the Prophet. One of them was Abu Dharr al-Ghifari. He was one of the early converts and a close associate of the Holy Prophet. Being of ascetic habits and temperament, he viewed with great disquiet the growing luxuries among the Muslims. During a visit to Damascus he was shocked to see the gorgeous costumes and palaces, crowds of slaves, and the fashionable living of the Muslims around Muawiya. He gave vent to his feelings in many speeches in the Mosque, in which he inveighed against the senseless luxury and license of the rich Muslims around him. He warned them of the dire punishment which would be meted out to them in life hereafter for their pomp and vanities. Quoting a Quranic verse that spendthrift people would be burnt with their gold and silver in the fires of hell, he called upon them to give away in alms and charity all that was more than their immediate needs. The words of Abu Dharr were eagerly listened to by the needy and the poor among the Muslims. They became restless and clamorous for the re-distribution of the wealth of their compatriots. Disorders threatened to break out. Muawiya, warned of the danger, tried to test the sincerity of the preacher and found him in dead earnest. But he was too great a Companion to be dealt with by him. He sent him to Medina, where Uthman endeavoured to expostulate with him. "When the people have paid Zakat and Sadaqah, they have purified the excess wealth they possess and enjoy it," he argued with Abu Dharr, "I have then no power to compel them to give away their possessions." But these arguments were of no avail. Abu Dharr denounced the rich as a greedy and ungodly race. He refused to live among them and requested the Caliph to permit him to go away. He was sent to Rabadha, a place some twenty miles from Medina on the road to Iraq. There he died in much distress and penury two years later in 653 A. D. His death, discovered by a party of the people coming to Medina from Kufa, became the talk of the town. People blamed the Caliph for his cruel treatment of a Companion. They charged him with his exile to a lonely place where he died in extreme want. Yet the fact remains that the Islam of Abu Dharr was incompatible with the Islam of the new Empire, which could only be built by the new aristocracy of the big landlords. He preached a sort of Islamic Socialism which would kill the goose that laid golden eggs. Who would have striven hard to conquer new lands for Islam and amass great fortunes, if they were to be distributed *in toto* to the indigent idlers and mendicants? Social evolution is not determined by sentimentalism or unrealistic moralism. However, the unfortunate Caliph earned disapproval and odium for his treatment of Abu Dharr. His unpopularity further increased when

he reprimanded Abdullah ibn Masud and some other Companions for their criticism of the compilation of the Quran and of Abu Dharr's treatment.

Alienation of the Companions. Gradually a change came over Medina since the Yathrib days. It was the seat of the government, from where armies, officials and orders were sent to the newly conquered provinces. Since the days of the Holy Prophet, a governing class has sprang up, comprising his Companions, guided and trained by him. He and his two successors, had always consulted the Companions, which became a regular council of advisers, the Shura, under Umar. The position and prestige in the council were based on piety, wisdom and sagacity of the participants and their standing with the Prophets, regardless of their tribal or family affiliations. The most prominent among them were Ali, Talha, Zubayr, Zayd bin Thabit, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, Abdur Rahman bin Auf (who died in the early years of Uthman's Caliphate) and others.

At first Hazrat Uthman continued the tradition of Umar and consulted the members of his Shura in affairs of the State. But gradually he gave up this practice and began to rely upon his kinsmen, like Merwan bin al-Hakam. The dismissal of those Companions who acted as governors in the provinces, like Sa'd, Mughira and Amr, and their replacement by his Umayyad kinsmen, many of whom had the ill-repute of persecuting the early converts, like themselves and of opposition to Islam in the days of the Prophet. These companions suspected that Uthman was turning the Muslim Empire into an Umayyad Empire, a family rule of the kinsmen of the Caliph. The Shura had ceased to meet, as the Caliph now closeted with his kinsmen more and more. For this, indeed, the unfortunate Caliph could not be much blamed. He was now a very aged person, nearly eighty years and more, harassed by the ever-growing host of his detractors and critics. The fears and suspicions engendered by the changes of governors, divided his advisers into several factions. In fact, the Qurayshites, the ruling tribe of the Empire, were spilt into two factions, the Hashimides, who looked to Ali, and the Umayyads who rallied around the Caliph. Owing to the internal dissensions and disputes among the Quraysh, the consultative machinery of the Shura broke down. The Caliph was pulled into different and even divergent directions by each one of these factions and groupings. At this critical juncture, secret letters from the provinces began to reach the Companions and citizens of Medina, informing and appealing to them to save the people from the greed, oppression and tyranny of the governors and officials of the Caliph, who were now almost all his kinsmen. Indeed, the people looked back to the day of Umar when all tribes had enjoyed the fruits of conquest and

government impartially. However, when a Companion or a citizen told the Caliph of the misdeeds of his officials, he took no action against them, which alienated them all the more. Thus most of the citizens of Medina, whether Companions or later converts, Quraysh or Ansar, held themselves more and more aloof from the business of the State and ceased to advise or be consulted by the Caliph. Some of them, like Ammar bin Yasar. actually joined the enemies of the Caliph. This was particularly true of the younger generation, the sons of Abu Bakr, Abu Hudhayfa and others, like Muhammad bin Abu Bakr and Muhammad bin Abu Hudhayfa. A dangerous gulf was created between the Caliph and the Companions and citizens of which the conspirators and intriguers, now springing up in the provinces, took full advantage in their nefarious plot to assassinate the Caliph, as the sequel would show.

Conspirators at Work

Abdullah bin Saba : The time was now ripe for the evil work of the conspirators to incite the discontented people against the Caliph. The Arab tribes were disaffected by the pretensions of the Quraysh, while, the Quraysh, were disgusted with the pretensions of the Umayyads. The new cities, like Kufa, Basra and Fustat, peopled by the nomadic settlers, were rife with discontent and jealous of the new aristocracy and resentful of their Umayyad rulers. In this strife-torn atmosphere appeared a man, named Abdullah bin Saba, also known as Ibn as-Sauda, after his mother.

His Teachings. Abdullah bin Saba was a born conspirator. He knew how to combine theology with politics—a combination which was all the more deadlier, for pure politics would not be very effective with the simple-minded Muslims. He was a Jew of the Yemen. During Uthman's Caliphate, sometimes, in 653 A. D. he migrated to Basra and embraced Islam, but with the ulterior motive to wreck its unity and subvert its theology. "He went from place to place," writes Tabari, "seeking to lead the Muslims into error." He preached a new Islam, which later came to be known as Sabaism or Extremist (Ghulat) Shiaism. Firstly, he preached that Muhammad (Sm), like Jesus, would return to earth. "It is strange, indeed," he said, "that people should believe in the return of Jesus as a Mesiah, and deny the return of Muhammad, although God has announced it in the Quran, where He says, 'Verily, He who has sent Quran to thee, will bring thee back to a place of return". He further taught that every Prophet had his executor or '*wasi*', who executed his testament after his death. Thus Moses had Aaron and Muhammad had Ali. "Muhammad is the last of the Prophets, and Ali is the last of the executors." There is a divinity that resides in every Prophet. The

divinity in Muhammad was transferred into Ali. But he was denied his legitimate right to rule Islam by Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman who were really usurpers, and should be removed from caliphate or succession to the Prophet which rightly belonged to Ali.

These strange preachings had a deep effect upon the simple-minded but restive and factious people of Basra, Kufa and Egypt, where he went later. They were discontented with Uthman's government and displeased with the rising aristocracy of the Quraysh and Umayyads who had monopolised governmental offices, State lands and all the good things of life. Many were won over by him and joined in the conspiracy to revolt and overthrow the government of Uthman. Later, as his followers, called Saba-ites, achieved success, they went a step further and declared Ali was God,—"*anta anta*", and taught that the divinity which resided in Ali was transfused or transmigrated into his sons and descendants. Thus they became divine Imams, to be worshipped by their followers. Finally, they preached the dogma of "Hidden Imam" that is, the Imam who had withdrawn himself from the world temporarily, but would return to fill the earth with justice when tyranny and unhappiness have become rampant on it. Thus the "Hidden Imam" was always at hand as compared to the prophetic Mesiah, for he could appear on earth at any time, while the latter would come only once before the Resurrection.

His Conspiracy. But, along with these quaint teachings, Abdullah bin Saba carried on actively the work of conspiracy. He organised a party in Basra, consisting of those who were discontented with their governor, Abdullah ibn Amir. Ibn Amir discovered the plotters and drove out Abdullah bin Saba from the city. He came to Kufa where he at once started his preaching and conspiracy among the people who were equally discontented and factious as those of Basra. However, he kept himself in touch with his followers in Basra by correspondence. In Kufa he formed a party which included Malik bin al-Ashtar, Abu Khusha al-Ghifari, Abu Musab, Amr bin Dhabi, and others. They were the leaders of the group which agitated against Walid bin Uqba and got him replaced by Said bin al-As. When the new governor discovered the plotters, he drove Abdullah bin Saba from the city. He went to Syria, where he found no opportunity for his conspiratorial work. Finally, he reached Fustat, where the atmosphere of disaffection against the government was like that of Basra and Kufa. He soon had a large following in Egypt, for many people were dissatisfied with their governor, Abdullah bin Abi Sarh. By secret correspondence, the Sabaites in Egypt kept themselves in touch with the plotters and malcentents in Basra and Kufa. They wrote secret letters to the Companions and citizens of

Medina, complaning of oppression and tyranny of the governors of Uthman. The people of Medina were also disappointed with the way the Umayyads were coming into the fore-front in the affairs of the Caliphate. Many of them believed what they were told by the conspirators. The time was now ripe for revolt.

The Mutiny of the Muqatila.

The Trouble in Kufa : 651-54 A. D. The revolt against the Caliph began with the troubles in Kufa. In course of time, it became a mutiny of the Muqatila, dwelling in the garrison-cities of Kufa, Basra and Fustat. Said bin al-As, the Governor of Kufa, had all the arrogance of the Umayyads without their tact and diplomacy. He boasted of the Qurayshite achievements and belittled those of the Arab tribes. He called the fertile Delta of Lower Iraq as the "Garden of the Quraysh". He thus insulted the Muqatila, the fighting Arabs, who retorted that "without our strong arms and lances, they could never conquer Iraq". Said's remarks spread disaffection in the city, which was at length expressed in an outcry. It was a custom with Said to hold informal meetings with the leading personalities of the city. One day, in such a meeting, when Malik al-Ashtar and other trouble-makers were present, a discussion began about the bravery of Talha bin Ubaydullah, a great Companion and warrior. At this the Governor remarked, "he was, indeed, a warrior of the Quraysh, a real gem amongst your Bedouin counterfeits. A few more like him and we should dwell at ease." Then a Bedouin chief remarked, "He is very generous," "Yes", added Said bin-al-As, "he is very rich. Had I been as rich as he, I too would have given you to your heart's content." At this a young man said, "Why don't you acquire Multat estate of the Chosroes lying near Kufa ?" "What!" shouted the company, "do you ask our best lands to be acquired by the Governor ?" With this they rushed upon the lad and his father who ran to protect him and beat them soundly, till the Governor pushed them out of the assembly. Thenceforward they began to abuse the governor openly. Said wrote to the Caliph against them. He instructed him to arrest the ringleaders and banish them to Syria where Muawiya would reform them. Ten of the ringleaders, including Al-Ashtar, were sent to Muawiya, who subjected them to various indignities such as calling them rude and uncultured Bedouins and traitors. After a month or so of such rough treatment, they repented and were set free. Ashamed to return to Kufa, they stayed behind in Syria, except Al-Ashtar, who went to Medina.

Said expelled from Kufa : 655 A. D. In spite of the expulsion of the ringleaders, matters did not improve in Kufa. It was at this time that Abdullah bin Saba reached Kufa, after being driven

out of Basra. Then Said made a mistake. He sent away most of the leading men in Kufa to military duties in the neighbouring districts of Persia and Bahrayn. Their influence might have kept the turbulent populace in check. Abdullah bin Saba sowed the seeds of sedition in Kufa before he was driven out from there to Egypt. The malcentents of Basra, Kufa and Egypt were now in league with each other through correspondence. The conspirators in Kufa now came to the front and recalled the exiles from Syria. Al-Ashtar and his collaborators were again in Kufa. At this critical juncture, Said left Kufa for Medina. The city fell into the hands of Al-Ashtar and his fellow-conspirators. He roused the popular passions by telling that he had just returned from Medina where Said was counselling the Caliph to decrease the *atā* or stipends of the soliders of Kufa and even of the women. At this a standard of revolt was raised. When news reached of the return of Said from Medina, a party of one thousand soldiers marched out of the city and stopped him from entering the city. When one of his slaves tried to push his way through the insurgents, they killed him on the spot. Said fled in terror to Medina to seek the aid of the Caliph. A party of the insurgents reached Medina hard on his heels. Hazrat Uthman, instead of taking strong measures against the rebels, weakly accepted their demands to dismiss Said and appoint Abu Musa al-Ashari in his place.

The Crisis deepens. It was the first fatal mistake of the Caliph. Had he severely punished the rebels as they rightly deserved, he would have crushed all the troubles brewing up against him. He would have rallied all the loyal elements among the Quraysh around him, for it was obviously a struggle between the new aristocracy of Islam, on the one hand, and the Bedouin unruliness, on the other. But by meekly submitting to the rebels, he obscured the issue which was about to ignite the civil war in the Islamic Empire. Instead, it became a tussle between the Caliph and the rebels, the Caliph protesting his good intentions and the rebels charging him with favouritism and nepotism. Had he been more firm, he would have exposed the conspirators and rebels for what they were, threatening the unity and stability of the Empire. But he missed his opportunity, and gently and mildly accepted the rebels' demands. By so doing he exposed his weakness, and convinced the people of Medina and the provinces that he did not possess the firmness and wisdom to steer the ship of the State through the coming storm. Many people, already displeased with his favouritism and nepotism, now became indifferent to his fate. They decided to remain neutral in the coming struggle. Some even went over to the side of the conspirators and rebels, as for instance, Muhammad bin Abu Bakr. Muhammad bin Abu Hudhayfa, and above all, Ammar bin Yasar. Amr ibn al-As left Medina for Palestine to await further developments there. Seditious

letters circulated freely everywhere and many people began to canvass the claims of their candidates to succeed Uthman. The events now moved rapidly towards the tragic end, the assassination of Uthman. There were still many among the citizens of Medina whose hearts were saddened by the impending tragedy. They asked Ali to explain the Caliph the dangers which beset him due to his weakness and nepotism. But Uthman refused to accept the charges. He went to the Mosque where he addressed the people after the prayers. He told them of the prosperity his reign had brought to the Muslims and of the victories his arms had won. "I entreat you," he concluded, "to refrain from abuse of me had my governors, lest you kindle the flames of sedition and revolt throughout the Empire." The appeal was marred by his cousin, Merwan, who cried at the end of his speech, "If you will oppose the Caliph, we shall soon bring it to the issue of the sword." The appeal produced little or no effect.

The Governor's Conference in Medina. At last on the advice of the leading citizens, the Caliph sent four emissaries to the four provinces to find out whether the people there were as oppressed and tyrannised by his officers as the secret letters alleged. Three of the emissaries returned from their provinces and reported that they discovered nothing amiss there. The fourth, Ammar bin Yasar, who was despatched to Fustat, failed to return. He had joined the rebels in that city. It showed that all was not well with the Empire. Thereupon the Caliph summoned the governors to meet him in Medina after the annual Hajj. He also proclaimed that anyone who had any grievance against his officials might put it before the Caliph at the time of the pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage time came, but no one stepped forth to put any complaint before the Caliph. Then the Caliph and the governors repaired to Medina, where he enquired them of the popular discontent. They could tell him nothing, for all was so quiet and usual. He then asked them what measures should be taken against the trouble-makers. Various suggestions were made, but none accepted. Then all advised the Caliph to take strong measures against the conspirators. But Uthman refused to be severe. "I am an aged man," he said, "I do not want to shed blood in the last days of my life." When Muawiya suggested the Caliph to accompany him to Syria where he would be safe, he replied that he could not leave the city where the Holy Prophet lay buried. When he offered to send a force of 5,000 Syrian troops, he rejected it also. "I shall never station troops around the houses of those who dwell around the grave of the Holy Prophet." "In that case," said Muawiya, "I see nothing but destruction awaiting thee." The Caliph replied, "God is my defence,

and that will suffice me." The governors then departed to their provinces.

Insurgent armies march on Medina : March, 656 A. D. While the Governors were away to Medina, the conspirators in Kufa, Basra and Fustat by brisk correspondence hurried their plan to rise in revolt. They planned to march on the Capital, where they would present an endless list of demands before the Caliph. If he rejected any one of them, they would force him to abdicate, in the last resort, by the sword. But they could not agree as to whom they should next elect. Egyptian party was for Ali, the people of Basra for Talha and those of Kufa for Zubayr. However, the plan miscarried. But after a few months, on the pretext of the Lesser Pilgrimage, a party of one thousand rebels each marched out from Basra, Kufa and Fustat. In the Egyptian party were Abdullah bin Saba, the arch-conspirator, Muhammad bin Abu Bakr, Muhammad bin Abu Hudhayfa and Ammar bin Yasar. Kufan party included Malik al-Ashtar, the ringleader of the Kufan conspirators. They converged upon Medina, where they reached in the month of March, 656. On hearing of their approach, a wave of anger spread through the city and the people took up arms. It was not since the Wars of Apostasy that a hostile force had approached the Capital of Islam.

The rebels found the city ready to meet their attack unitedly. They were dismayed. Their ringleaders approached Ali, Talha and Zubayr. But they rebuked the rebels for their impudence. At last they feigned to be satisfied with the assurance of the Caliph to redress their grievances, and agreed to return home. The three forces then, apparently, took the road to their respective places. The city heaved a sigh of relief.

But a few days later the citizens were surprised to see the three hostile bands again converging upon Medina. Thereupon Ali went out to enquire the reason of their sudden return. In reply they produced a letter of the Caliph which the Egyptian band had captured from the person of a camel-rider hurrying towards Fustat. He was a slave of Uthman and the camel was the State-camel. The letter was addressed to Abdullah bin Abi Sarah, ordering him to arrest, torture, cut the beards of the insurgent leaders and put them to death. It was a breach of pardon which the Caliph had granted to the rebels before their departure. They now accused him of breach of trust and demanded his abdication. Suspecting collusion, Ali asked them as to how did the other two parties, going in opposite directions, come to know of the letter and its capture. But the insurgents in reply only produced the letter which apparently bore the seal of the Caliph. When Ali enquired the Caliph, he denied all knowledge of writing it. The rebels, having now secured

an entry into the city, became insolent and defiant of the Caliph's authority. They had sowed seeds of doubt in the hearts of the majority of the citizens, who suspected that the letter was the work of Merwan, the cousin and secretary of the Caliph, who had his confidence. Many of them shut themselves in their houses. So did Ali, Talha, Zubayr and other leading men of Medina. The unfortunate Caliph was left alone to the tender mercies of the rebels. Only his own Umayyad kinsmen and the young sons of Ali, Talha, Zubayr and others remained to defend him. A few days later, the rebels who flocked the Mosque, severely wounded the Caliph by throwing stones at him when he rose to deliver his *Khutbah*. He was carried home unconscious. He was now besieged in his house by the rebels. Knowing the designs of the rebels now the Caliph summoned Ali, Talha and Zubayr to his help. But they did nothing more than to send their sons to defend him. Upon this the Caliph came to the roof of his house and addressed the rebels, "O men, you have risen up to slay the Lord's elect. Have a care. By taking my life without any cause you will suspend the sword over your own necks. Sedition and bloodshed will then never depart from among the Muslims."

Martyrdom of Uthman: 17 June, 656 A.D. 18 Dhu'l Hajja 35 A.H. For about forty days the Caliph was besieged by the rebels in his own house. The pilgrimage had come. Most of the citizens departed to Mecca. The city was now completely in the hands of the rebels. They tightened their siege around the Caliph's house, even cutting off its water supply. The little band of Caliph's defenders resisted the rebels at the gate. At last the pilgrimage ended. The rebels became apprehensive of the returning pilgrims in their thousands, who would be indignant over the insults offered by them to the Caliph. News of armies marching from the provinces to the rescue of Caliph also reached Medina. The rebels then decided to hurry with their nefarious design to kill the Caliph. A party of eight scaled the wall in the rear of the house and jumped in. Then two of them rushed upon the aged Caliph and cut him down with their swords, while he was reciting the Quran. Thus died the third Caliph, on 18 Dhu'l Hajja, 17th June, 656 A.D. So great was the fear of the rebels, that for three days the dead body of the Caliph lay unburied. At last it was secretly buried in the cemetry of Al-Baqi. Soon after their dastardly act, the rebels rushed to the Public Treasury and plundered it. Lawlessness reigned over Medina.

Estimate of Uthman's Character and Caliphate.

His Character and Caliphate: Character of Hazrat Uthman became a subject of heated controversy for long, after his martyrdom. That he had many laudable qualities and noble virtues is indis-

putable. Since his early youth, he was renowned for his chastity, integrity and modesty. Islam had a deeply edifying influence on his pure nature. He became one of the most pious among the pious company of the Companions. His prayers were long and his fasting constant. He was gentle, kind-hearted, generous and mild. Leniency was the hall-mark of his government. As a man and as a Caliph, he displayed great energy and courage, even in the face of the besiegers and assassins. And his courage did not sink when he saw himself alone and defenceless amidst a city which was then in the hands of the people whose swords were turned against him. To this extent he was a martyr, a martyr to the solidarity of Islam and his resolution not to shed Muslim blood to save himself from his merciless enemies surrounding him. He was innocent, for in the face of personal danger, he refused to lift even his little finger to punish his detractors and enemies.

Hazrat Uthman was also an energetic Caliph. During his twelve years of reign, he not only saved the young Empire from its enemies who had incited rebellions in Persia, invaded Syria and Alexandria, but also expanded it by brilliant victories in all the four directions of the Empire. Suffice to say that during his reign such vast territories as Khurasan, Kirman and Makran, Armenia, Cyprus, Ifriqia and Nubia were annexed to the Arab Empire. Above all, Hazrat Uthman was the first ruler in the history of Islam who built a navy and won decisive victories at sea. He was indeed the builder of the Arab naval power in the Mediterranean which proved decisive in the Muslim advance into the farthest corners of North Africa and Spain in later decades. Naval history of Islam begins with him.

His Failings as a Statesman: But Hazrat Uthman lacked some essential qualities as a statesman. His personal qualities and noble virtues might have endeared him to his people, if he had been a ruler in times of peace. But his age was an age of transition in the fortunes of the Islamic State. The age of equalitarian tribalism was coming to a close and an era of big feudalism and strong centralism was opening. Even the tribal feudalism of Hazrat Umar was becoming unstable and was gradually replaced by the big feudalism of the new aristocracy. But the transition from one social order to another required political leadership of a very high calibre, which could visualise the significance of the change properly and guide it intelligently. Hazrat Uthman lacked these qualities of statesmanship. His personal virtues and qualities of gentleness, mildness and reluctance to use strong measures prevented him from properly understanding the supreme task of steering the ship of the State, at the helm of which he stood, safely and successfully through the storms and stresses of the age of crisis and transition in which he found himself. He was too weak, too vacillating and often irresolute in the face of these perils. Weakness or lack of firmness in the

policies and administration is a bane of politics and good government. It weakened the whole body politique of his Caliphate.

Another equally tragic failing of the Caliph was his favouritism or nepotism for his Umayyad kinsmen. When blamed for it, he endeavoured to justify it by declaring that the Holy Prophet also favoured his own Hashmide kinsmen. But it is absolutely wrong. The Holy Prophet never allowed his love and solicitude for his relatives and kinsmen to come in between him and the interest of the Islamic State and society, or affect his responsibilities as the head of the State. He never allowed his kinsmen to monopolize governmental offices. His love for his kinsmen was a private virtue, which never came between him and his public duties. Favouritism or nepotism really means the intrusion of private virtue into public affairs or at public expense. It was exactly this that Hazrat Uthman had allowed to happen. Owing to his generous, gentle and mild nature, he was at first, very popular among the people, who wanted a relief from the stern rule of Umar. But as time passed and as he allowed his Umayyad relatives and kinsmen to acquire nearly all the key-positions in the government of the provinces, he created doubts and suspicions in the hearts of people and discontent among the Arab tribes. He ceased to consult the Shura of the leading Companions and citizens of Medina and relied more and more on the advice of his kinsmen. Thus he narrowed the support of a large number of people in Medina which he needed so urgently against the rising tide of discontent among the Arab tribes, the Muqatila, due to the emergence of the new aristocracy. Had he relied upon all the loyal elements among Companions, the citizens of Medina and the chiefs of the tribes, regardless of their tribal or clan affiliation, and recruited his governors from them all, he could have organised a strong and centralised government at Medina, which would have held the nomadic indiscipline of the Muqatila in check. With a far sighted leadership, broad-based centralism and an impartial administration, smacking neither of favouritism nor of irresolution, Hazrat Uthman would have overcome the political crisis he was confronted with.

By his untimely leniency and misplaced nepotism, he obscured the real issue confronting the State, viz., the struggle between a new social order and the old unruly nomadism in the new environment of the settled life of the new towns and cities of Iraq and Egypt. By his nepotism, he lowered the significance of this struggle to the level of a personal tussle between himself and his detractors and enemies. He lost the sympathy and support of many who could have defended him and saved the Islamic Empire from the times of trouble, the *Fitna*, which was unleashed on the Islamic world immediately after his death. Hazrat Uthman was no doubt, a good but not a great Caliph . Owing to his weakness

as a ruler he changed an Age of Translation into an Age of Troubles or civil war which began soon after his death.

Historical Consequences of Uthman's Martyrdom. The murder of Hazrat Uthman was a turning-point in the history of Islam. It opened the flood-gates of the first civil war or 'Fitna' as the Arab historians put it. It destroyed, as Browne writes, "once and for all the outward semblance of unity which had hitherto existed in Islam and led directly to wars wherein for the first time the sword was turned by Muslims against their fellow-believers." The Caliphate of Ali, who succeeded Uthman, was bedevilled with the consequences of his death. It raked up the almost forgotten family quarrels of the Umayyad and Hashmide clans of the pre-Islamic Mecca, and magnified them into an importance and significance which they did not possess in the petty city-state of the Quraysh. Due to this fact, at first the polities and then the religion of the Islamic State came to be dominated by these family quarrels of the two Qurayshite clans. The ensuing civil war or *Fitna* was at first a political quarrel. But it soon acquired the form of a religious schism, which permanently split Islam into two and later into more sects and dogmas. Though Muawiya and other Umayyad rulers succeeded, however temporarily, in restoring political unity of the Islamic Empire, they failed to heal its religious dissensions and disputes. Indeed, the death of Uthman shattered the unity and solidarity of Islam for all subsequent ages, as he had himself predicted. "Once you draw the sword against me," he warned the besiegers, "you will open among the Muslims a door of dissension that will never be closed."

The revolt against Uthman was the revolt of the disorderly and turbulent elements of the Arab tribes against their governors who sought to impose discipline, law and order among them. His death was, though temporarily, a victory of the forces of disorderly nomadism over the forces of orderly government and strong centralism. But this fact posed a difficult question for Uthman's successors: whether they should side with the forces of discipline and centralism or with the forces of tribal disorder and lawlessnes or, to put it in sociological terms, whether they should be on the side of the new social forces of feudaism or of the old tribalism.

Unfortunately, the immediate consequences of Uthama's death was that it threw Hazrat Ali into the arms of the rebels. The Hashimites became the allies of the unruly nomadism of the Iraqi tribes, while the Umayyads, under the leadership of Muawiya, relied upon the more disciplined tribes of Syria. Once again in the person of the two great protagonists of the ensuing civil war, Hazrat Ali and Amir Muawiya, the two divergent sociopolitical forces of early Islam, the equalitarian but unruly tribalism of Iraq

confronted its rival, the emergent big feudalism of Syria. For more than a century this antagonism of Syria and Iraq dominated the politics of Islam and determined its destiny in more than one way. Umayyad Caliphate was, so to say, both a product and a victim of this antoganism.

Furthermore, the Caliphate of Uthman created such a crisis that the party of the Orthodox Muslims was thrown into the background in the bitter struggle between the rival claims of Ali and Muawiya. It was indeed, a mystery why the mantle of Umar did not fall on the shoulders of anyone among the Orthodox party. The Orthodox pietists remained silent and passive in face of the claims of Banu Hashim and Banu Umayya, both of whom were aiming ultimately to transform the elective Caliphate into a hereditary one, confined within their own family. Perhaps their quiescence, inactivity, passivism and powerlessness were due to the decline in the power and influence of Medina as the capital of the Empire.

The death of Uthman was the first indication that the political importance and hegemony, which Medina possessed since the days of the Holy Prophet, was vanishing. The Orthodox party failed to realise this shift in the balance of political forces in the Arab Empire. They stuck to Medina and, thereby, lost gradually but inevitably, their pre-eminent position and power in the politics though not in the theology of early Islam Their theological influence, coupled with that of other theological centres emerging in other cities, especially in the new cities of Kufa, and Basra, gave rise to the political influence of a new class of the *Ulema*, who spun out various social, political, economic, moral and cultural theories, as embodied in *fiqh* and *sharia*. Thus the pietist party, politically eclipsed by the rise and rule of the Umayyad caliphs, quietly became a new force that acquired political influence under the Abbasides and thus became an important factor in the genesis and development of Medieval Islam.

HAZRAT ALI : 656—61 A. D./35-49 A.H.

CHAPTER 28

ELECTION AND EARLY DIFFICULTIES OF ALI : FIRST CIVIL WAR

23 June, 656—December, 656

Election of Ali. The rebels had done for what they had come to Medina: they had put Uthman to death. The capital was in the grip of terror and lawlessness. For six days there was no Caliph to head the Islamic State. But this condition could not last long. The rebels had to return to their homes. The Muslims were returning from the pilgrimage. They would be shocked by the news of the murder of their Caliph and would punish them for their dastardly and traitorous act. So the rebels must hurry to return home. But they could not leave Medina without first finding a new Caliph of their own choice. So they must hurry with it before they could depart. There was, however, no unanimity among them on the new caliph. The Egyptian rebels favoured Ali, the Kufans Zubayr and the Basrans Talha. The Egyptians were a dominant group, including Ammar bin Yasar, Muhammad bin Abu Bakr and Abdullah bin Saba, who had already proclaimed that Ali and Ali along ought to be a successor of the Prophet. Several citizens also supported Ali's claim. Other rebel groups, especially the Kufa group, led by Al-Ashtar supported his claim also. So the rebels and some of the citizens went to Ali and offered to elect him as Caliph. He hesitased. He offered to pay homage either to Talha or Zubayr. But the rebels insisted. At length, Ali yielded on the condition that the other Companions and citizens also accept him. This was done. He took the oath to rule "according to the Book of God." The rebels and a large number of the citizens saluted him as Caliph and took the 'bayt' or oath of allegiance at his hands, on 24th Dhu'l Hijjah, 35 A,H./23rd June, 656 A.D. At first Talha and Zubayr resisted, but then yielded to rebel pressure, as they asserted latter and paid homage to the new Caliph. The rebels then departed home.

Implications of Ali's Election. Thus was Hazrat Ali elected as Caliph. It took place at a time and in a manner that deserve to be borne in mind. Nothing illustrates the vague and anomalous nature of the constitution of the Early Caliphate more than the election of Ali. It was the work of the rebels, who had committed high treason only a few days before. According to the first

principle of the constitutional law they would have been disqualified as voters and electors. Yet they formed, what we might say, the "college of electors" and had co-opted a few citizens with them. Then they employed force or threat of force against the people to compel homage to Ali, of which the best examples were those of Talha and Zubayr who paid homage under duress, as they proclaimed later. Whether true or not, it created endless difficulties for the new Caliph He opened himself to the charge of being an accomplice of Uthman's murderers, although he was not involved in this evil affair at all. Ali's election was not a free election, even in the sense as the Arabs understood it. He was not accepted as Caliph by all the citizens and especially by all the Companions in Medina. Several Ansarite Companions, like Hassan bin Thabit, Kab bin Malik, Zayd bin Thabit and Nu'man bin Bashir, did not pay homage to him. Similarly several Qurayshites also did not take the oath of allegiance at his hands. They were, to mention a few, Abdullah bin Amar, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas and others. The Umayyad clan, of course, paid no homage at all. They had fled to Mecca or Syria immediately after Uthman's death. The non-acceptance of so many Companions and citizens was itself a proof that there was no unanimity as there had been in the three elections before.

Hazrat Ali also did not insist upon universal acceptance. His anomalous election, however, necessitated that he must be very circumspect and patient in his future policy and acts. But in such matters he showed neither patience nor foresight. He was now the only one among the Companions who deserved to be elected. He regarded his claim to the Caliphate as the only legitimate one, based as it was on his kinship with the Holy Prophet, his piety and services to Islam, seniority among the surviving Companions and priority in conversion. Neverthless circumstances of his election complicated the chances of universal acceptance of his claim by all Muslims, especially when the influence of Medina was declining and the voice of the Muslims in other towns and provinces had to be heard in the troubled times that were coming. Much depended on the character and personality of Hazrat Ali as to how he would steer the ship of State through the troubled times ahead.

His difficulties. Ali found the Caliphate on bed of roses. As a matter of fact, his Caliphate commenced at a time when the Islamic Empire was in the thick of troubles. His difficulties were almost numberless. His life-long associates, the Companions and citizens of Medina, were openly or secretly opposed to his election. Medina had passed through a crisis of terror and lawlessness, which did not end with the departure of the rebels to their provinces. It was full of thousands of slaves, the prisoners of war, who were brought to Medina and employed as labourers, domestic

servants, guards, etc. This servile population was now out of control, as authority had vanished during the evil days of the rebels. Then the Bedouin tribes in the neighbouring desert, eager as ever to plunder a rich city, gathered around it like so many vultures, ready to fall upon and plunder it. It looked as if the Days of Ignorance had returned.

The situation abroad was equally critical and uncertain. When the news of Uthman's murder reached the provinces, a cry was raised by many horrified Muslims to punish his murderers. But conflicting loyalties, motives and suspicions silenced some and made others to defend the murderers. It was significant of the troubled times that no unanimity of opinion existed among the people, whether in Medina or elsewhere. Some were pro-Ali, others pro-Uthman, still others pro-Muawiya, and not a few neutral among conflicting claims. What is more, loyalties and sympathies changed or shifted rapidly at every new event as the rivalry and civil war between Ali and his opponents developed.

Ali's Character. In face of such uncertainties and difficulties, it required tact, patience, foresight and decision on the part of the new Caliph. Hazrat Ali was a little over fifty years at the time of his election. He had been a brave warrior in the days of the Holy Prophet. However, he did not participate in the wars of conquest during the Caliphates of Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman, but remained in Medina, where he acted as a confidential adviser of the Caliphs and active member of their Shura He continued to act in the same capacity during the early years of Uthman's Caliphate. But later relations became cool between the two, as Uthman began to rely more and more upon his kinsmen. Hazrat Ali had always claimed his right to be a Caliph, but his claim was denied three times successively. Now when, at last, he became a Caliph, he was confronted with a situation which required certain qualities from him. But he lacked them. Though a brave soldier, Hazrat Ali lacked energy and prompt decision. He was too quick in some matters and too slow in others. Though a wise counsellor, he had a poor understanding of the stern realities of the difficult situation confronting him. Above all, he lacked that tact and foresight which so conspicuously characterised his greatest rival, Muawiya. "He had", as R. A. Nicholson writes, "no talent for the stern realities of statecraft, and was overmatched by unscrupulous rivals who knew that 'war is game of deceit'[1] He based his claim to be accepted as Caliph on his relationship with the Holy Prophet. But the bulk of the Arabs were too equalitarian and too democratic to accept such hereditary and legitimistic claims of the Ahl al-Bayt. "One would have thought," writes Syed Ameer Ali,

1. R. A. Nicholson. *A Literary History of the Arabs*, p. 191.

quoting the French writer Sedillot, "that all would have bowed before this glory so pure and grand ; but it was not to be."[1]

Demand for punishing Uthman's murderers : The murder of Uthman shocked the Quraysh and other loyal elements among the Muslims. A cry was at once raised that his assassins must be given condign punishment for high treason and dastardly act. Ali procrastinated. He had no hand in this act and was himself anxious to punish them But he refused to take any action against the murderers on the ground that more urgent tasks than their punishment awaited his attention and action, and that the punishment of the murderers was legally difficult if not impossible, in view of their large number. The actual murderer could not be identified among the several who had jumped into the house of Uthman on the fateful day. It was, however, a mistake on the part of the Caliph. Had he taken prompt action even against those few who jumped into Uthman's house he would have rallied all loyal elements around him, silenced his critics, forestalled his rivals preparing to make it an issue of the Caliphate, defended the honour and preserved the unity of the Empire as well as secured universal acceptance of his own election as Caliph. Thus he would have nipped in the bud several troubles by one action. But he did not act. He thereby missed an opportunity to make his Caliphate a success. The pro-Uthman elements among the Companions and citizens of Medina and in the provinces refused to accept his plea to postpone the retribution against Uthman's assassins.

However several persons among the Companions soon took up the cry of avenging his murder. They revolted against the Caliph on the ground that he was not punishing the murderers and defending the honour and dignity of Islam. Thus what was really an administrative question became a political issue of revolt against the Caliph. The first to lead this revolt were Talha, Zubayr and Aysha.

Dismissal of Uthman's Governors. Though reluctant to take prompt action against Uthman's assassins, Ali was, however, prompt in dismissing his governors. He rightly said that the revolt against Uthman was due to his governors who had become highly unpopular with people they ruled. So no sooner was he elected than he issued orders replacing them by his own nominees.

He disregarded the advice of his friends and kinsmen, requesting him to temporise dismissals, or at least make distinction between Muawiya and other governors of Uthman. When his intention became known in Medina, Mughira bin Shu'ba, who was

1. Ameer Ali. *A Short History of the Saracens*, p. 49.

then pro-Ali, approached the Caliph. He advised him not to hurry with their dismissal but to retain them in their posts and ask them to accept him as Caliph. "When once they have rendered homage to you," said Mughira, "and its news has been published among their troops, you may then dismiss them." Hazrat Ali replied that he would think over it. Next day Mughira again came to the Caliph and said, "What I said yesterday I am now against it. You should promptly remove all the governors of Uthman so that you may have no doubt or disaffection in any quarter." The fact was that Mughira, who was pro-Ali the day before had his doubts about Ali's action afterwards and became pro-Muawiya overnight. Soon after, he quietly left Medina for Damascus, where he secured the confidence of Muawiya.

Soon after Mughira's departure, Abdullah bin Abbas, the cousin of the Caliph, who had just then returned from pilgrimage, came to the Caliph and enquired from him what Mughira was saying. Being told, Ibn Abbas remarked, "O, Ameer ul Momineen! Mughira advised you well yesterday, but he was deceiving you to-day."

"How ?" enquired Ali.

"You know that Muawiya and other Umayyad governors are worldly people. What they want is office, no matter who is the Caliph. If you confirm them in their posts, they will accept you as Caliph. If not, they would at once raise the cry that you were not elected by a Shura and therefore not a Caliph at all. They will also accuse you of being a party to Uthman's murder and will incite the people of Syria and Iraq to revolt against you."

Ali demurred. "At any rate", continued Ibn Abbas, "retain Muawiya. It was Umar and not Uthman who placed him there, and all Syria follows him."

The Caliph refused. "No, I will not retain him even for a single day," he replied categorically.

"If you dismiss him," reasoned Ibn Abbas once again, "All Arabs would rise against you and you will have to face insurmountable difficulties. Other governors will also refuse to accept your caliphate and on the pretext of avenging Uthman's murder would raise the standard of revolt against you. Confirm him as the governor of Syria and they care not who is Caliph. When you are firmly in power, you may depose him if you will. It will be easy then."

"Never," replied Ali, "I shall not keep these worldly people in

office for a single day. If they obey me, well and good. But if not, the sword will decide between us."

"You are brave," remarked Ibn Abbas, "but innocent of the craft of war. Has not the Prophet himself once said, 'what is war but a game of deception ?"

"That is true," responded Ali, "but I will have none of Muawiya.

"Then," remarked Ibn Abbas, "You may better depart to your property in Yenbo and shut the gates of your fort behind you. The Bedouins are hovering around Medina. If you now make more enemies, they will surely find you out and lay the blood of Uthman at your door."

Ali remained adament. He offered to appoint Ibn Abbas as the governor in place of Muawiya. But he refused. "The moment I shall step into the borders of Syria," said Ibn Abbas "Muawyia would arrest me and behead or imprison me because of Uthman's death and my relationship with you. Make terms with him, before it is too late." But Ali turned a deaf ear to such entreaties and advice.

Ali's Governors. Ali's first act of state was to dismiss the governors of Uthman. He despatched his own nominees to replace them. Uthman bin Hanif was sent to Basra to replace Abdullah bin Amir, Amarah bin Shahab to Kufa to replace Abu Musa al-Ashari, Qays bin Sa'd to Egypt to replace Abdullah bin Sarh, and Suhayl bin Hanif to Syria to replace Muawiya. It was easier to issue orders, but difficult to secure compliance. Some of the nominees of the Caliph succeeded peacefully. Thus Uthman's governor in Yemen gave up his post, siezed the money in the public treasury and fled to Mecca. Ali's nominee, Ubaydullah bin Abbas, succeeded him without any trouble. In Basra, Ibn Amir, reluctant to provoke hostilities, retired to Mecca. But his successor, Uthman bin Hanif could not enter the city easily, for there was a strong pro-Uthman party in it. However, he had the support of a pro-Ali party. A third party was neutral. In Egypt also there were three parties among the people. Qays bin Sa'd, Ali's nominee, was a wise and able ruler. He secured the support of the pro-Uthman party by promising to punish his murderers. In Kufa, the governor, Abu Musa al-Ashari, was a neutralist. He advised the people not to take sides. The people supported their governor and Ali's nominee, Amarah, failed to enter the city. A still more rough treatment awaited Suhayl bin Hanif, sent to Syria. When he stepped onto Syrian territory at Tabuk, a part of troops stationed by Muawyia at the border, turned him back at the point

of the sword.

"Who are you ?" enquire the Syrian guard.

"I am the new governor of Syria", replied Suhayl.

"If you are sent by Uthman, we accept you. Otherwise go back lest trouble comes to you," they said.

"Don't you know what has happened in Medina ?" asked Suhayl.

"We know all," they said threateningly. "If you want no harm, you may better return to Ali." Thus foiled, Suhyal returned to Medina and reported failure of his mission.

Showdown between Ali and Muawiya : The events now rapidly led to a showdown between Ali and Muawiya. Disappointed in his first attempt to dismiss Muawiya, Ali consulted Talha and Zubayr about his next move. But they offered him no help. Instead, they quietly left Medina for Mecca, where after about three months they also raised a standard of revolt against him. In the meanwhile, relations between Ali and Muawiya rapidly deteriorated. Ali resolved to make one more attempt to bring about a peaceful submission of Muawiya and Abu Musa. He wrote letters to both demanding their allegiane. Abu Musa replied courteously but warned the Caliph of disaffection against him in Kufa. Muawiya did not reply his letter for several weeks. In the meanwhile, he harangued the people against the murderers of Uthman from the pulpit in the Mosque of Damascus, where the blood-stained shirt of Uthman with the mangled fingers of his wife, Naila, stuck to it, was hanged before large crowds of weeping people. Aroused by Muawiya to violent indigation, the Syrians demanded to avenge the murder of Uthman. But he held them in leash till he knew what Ali would do to him. "Had Ali been wise," writes Sir William Muir, "he would have used the angry Syrians to take vengeance on the regicides, and in so doing crush as well the rising rebellion of the Arab tribes. In this work they would have been his strongest help; for Syria never suffered from the Bedawi turbulance which kept Al-Iraq and Egypt in continual turmoil." But Hazrat Ali distrusted the Umayyads in general and Muawiya in particular very much. He was resolved to remove them from their posts peacefully or by force of arms. On his side, Muawiya had all the strings in his hands. He held the Syrians under him in complete control. He secretly wrote to Talha and Zubayr, offering to recognise Talha's caliphate. He incited the people of Basra to oppose Ali's governor.

At last, being convinced of Ali's intentions to dismiss Muawiya and his reluctance to punish the murderers of Uthman, the Syrians soon raised the cry of war against the Caliph. They now accused him of collusion, if not complicity, with the assassins of Uthman and demanded to be led against him. Thus the demand for avenging Uthman's blood became a cause of revolt against Ali. At this stage, in August, 656, Muawiya decided to reply to the Coliph's letter. But he adopted a strange method. A blank envelope was entrusted to a messenger to deliver it to the Caliph in Medina, on which the words "From Muawiya to Ali" were written in bold letters. As instructed, the messenger entered Medina with the letter hanging by the side of his camel in such a way that the address on it could be seen by the people, so that they might know about an important communication from Damascus. When Ali opened the letter, he found it blank and was puzzled by it. On enquiry, the massenger told the Caliph that 60,000 weeping men had assembled around the bloodstained shirt of Uthman, determined to avenge his blood, holding you responsible for his murder. "Me ?" asked Ali in astonishment, and added "Do you not see that I am powerless to punish them. God is my witness that I am innocent. As for you, your life is safe. Depart." The messenger hurriedly departed to Syria, when cries were raised to kill him for his impudence to accuse the Caliph of Uthman's murder. Further negotiations were futile. The time for action had come. Ali declared war on the recalcitrant governor of Syria. An army of 40,000 men was raised, though with some initial difficulty. At this stage, Talha and Zubayr departed from Medina to perform Umrah in Mecca, where they raised the standard of revolt against Ali. The Caliph had not yet left for Syria, when the news of the revolt in Mecca and the capture of Basra by Talha and Zubayr reached him in Medina. He changed his plans of war at once, and marched towards Iraq.

War against Talha, Zubayr and Aysha: Since the death of Uthman, Mecca, being a sanctuary, had become the rendezvous of all those who fled from the fear of the regicides, or in protest and indignation against Ali who was now publicly reluctant to punish them. Besides the Umayyads, the first to reach Mecca was Hazrat Aysha. She had been to Mecca on pilgrimage during the troubled days when Uthman was besieged by the rebels. While returning to Medina, she heard the news of his murder on the way. She immediately returned to Mecca, where she started haranguing the people to avenge the death of Uthman. Sometimes later, in August, 656, Talha and Zubayr also arrived from Medina. As they said, they left the people in great perplexity, with the slaves and Bedouins out for mischief and they unable to distinguish the right from wrong. In Mecca, Talha and Zubayr also joined Aysha and others who were crying to avenge Uthman's blood. Soon funds were collected

to raise an army of vengeance. It consisted of 3000 men, of whom 1000 were men of Mecca and Medina. Al-Ala, Uthman's governor of Yemen, and Abdullah bin Amir, Uthman's governor of Basra, contributed treasures, they had brought with them, to equip the army. On Ibn Amir's suggestion, it was decided to march upon Basra. So, in October, 656, the army of vengeance left Mecca for Basra, led by Talha, Zubayr and Aysha.

Orthodox Party in Action: Conflicting motives inspired both the commanders and their followers Their ostensible object was to avenge the murder of Uthman. But their desire for just revenge was mixed and even confounded with the secret ambition to capture the Caliphate. Talha, Zubayr and Aysha belonged to the ambitious section of the Orthodox party. Both Talha and Zubayr had taken the oath of allegiance to Ali. They expected that the Caliph would include them in the Shura. But Ali did not. They became displeased with him. However, they noticed that power was slipping out of the hands of the Caliph. Medina had become unsafe due to the depradations and lawlessness of the Bedouins and the slaves. Both went to the Caliph and urged him to take strong measures against the lawless elements. "My brothers," replied Ali, "I am not indifferent to what is happening in Medina. But for the time being, I am helpless. The people are returning to the ways of Jahiliya. Just now they are beyond my power. Wait and God will guide us." But they were reluctant to wait. They asked the Caliph to give them the governorships of Basra and Kufa. But Ali refused. At this they left Medina and reached Mecca, where they joined with the pro-Uthman party of revenge. When the preparations for revolt were complete, a dispute about the election to caliphate began between the two in case they won a victory. But Aysha silenced this quarrel, and the army set out for Basra.

Capture of Basra: When the rebel army reached near Basra, they were opposed by an army under Uthman bin Hanif, Ali's governor of Basra. The city was divided into three parties, namely, pro-Uthman group which sought to avenge his death, pro-Ali group which supported Uthman bin Hanif and a neutral group. When the governor marched out of the city to oppose the rebels, the pro-Uthman group deserted to their side. The two forces were reluctant to fight. The governor charged Talha and Zubayr of treacherously violating their oath of allegiance which they were the first to take in Medina. They replied that they had been forced to take the oath by the insurgents. So the matter turned on the issue whether they had taken the oath voluntarily or under duress It was finally decided that a deputation be sent to Medina to enquire the citizens about their oath. If it was taken by force, the governor would retire and leave Basra to Talha and Zubayr. The deputation came to Medina, and on enquiry, found that the citizens differed in their

opinions. Some of them said that Talha and Zubayr had voluntarily taken the oath, but many asserted that they did so under duress. In the meantime, the army of Talha and Zubayr had entered the city. When the deputation reported difference of opinion in Medina, the rebels insisted that Ibn Hanif should leave Basra. After a little fighting, Uthman bin Hanif fled away and the city fell into the hands of Talha and Zubayr. True to their purpose, they orderded the arrest of the murderers of Uthman, and put nearly 600 of them to death.

Ali advances upon Basra: A secret messenger brought the news of the departure of the rebel force to the Caliph in Medina. He had already collected a force to march against Muawiya. But he now changed his plans. With a small force, he at once marched out of Medina in pursuit of the rebel army. But he failed to intercept it on the road to Basra. When he received the news of its capture by the rebels, he halted on the road to collect more troops before advancing against them. Messengers were sent to Kufa for reinforcements. Abu Musa al-Ashari was reluctant to do so. But Hasan, the son of the Caliph, persuaded the people to join the army of the Caliph. His appeal was widely responded by the Arab tribes. They deposed Abu Musa and some 10,000 men set out from Kufa to join the Caliph. Among them were many who had revolted and murdered Uthman. Thus at the head of about 20,000 men the Caliph advanced upon Basra.

Negotiations for Peace: Ali had no desire to start fighting. He was a man of peace, especially in this affair in which Muslims were to fight against Muslims. He sought to arrive at a compromise with his opponents and sent al-Qaqa to them with this purpose. Talha, Zubayr and Aysha also were ready to come to an agreement with the Caliph for the sake of peace and unity of Islam. Al-Qaqa returned to Ali with their message of amity. When the two armies came face to face, the Caliph himself set out to meet Talha and Zubayr. Sentiments of compromise and amity were expressed on both sides and they dispersed for the night with a view to patch up their quarrel and make peace the next morning.

Conspirators at work: But a different morning dawned upon them the next day. As already stated, Ali's army had a considerable number of the murderers of Uthman, headed by Al-Ashtar. They were disquieted by the negotiations for peace and compromise between the Caliph and Talha and Zubayr. They knew very well that if peace were made, they would be punished for their misdeed by the army of Talha and Zubayr. They met secretly and conspired to wreck all chances of peace by attacking the other army in the dark of the night. It was done as agreed.

Battle of the Camel: December 656: The conspirators attacked the camp of the army of Talha and Zubayr in the dark of the night. Taken by surprise, they retaliated by attacking the main army of Ali, both accusing the other of treachery. Ali did his best to stop fighting but to no avail. When the morning dawned the two armies were furiously at war with each other. Fighting was long and bitter, for both sides were equally brave and resolute. Ali's army, though somewhat lesser than the army of Talha and Zubayr, fought more fiercely. It was led by the regicides who knew that defeat would be disastrous for them. The leaders, however, had no heart in the fighting. They were grieved by the thought that it was the first battle in which Muslims were fighting against Muslims. When Ali reproached them for it, both Talha and Zubayr withdrew from the battlefield. But they did not live long. Zubayr was pursued by a conspirator who killed him when he was prostrating in prayer. Talha died in Basra of the wound inflicted by an arrow on the battlefield. However, their army continued to fight even after the departure of its leaders. The fighting raged around the camel Hazrat Aysha was riding; hence it came to be known as the "battle of the Camel". She harangued her followers from atop her camel to redouble their attacks. Knowing that the enemy would not stop fighting so long as Aysha's camel remained in their midst, Ali ordered one of his men to cut down its legs. The animal fell down with a loud cry, but Hazrat Aysha landed safely. No sooner did the camel fall than the fighting ceased. Hazrat Aysha was safely and politely conducted to her tent.

Consequences: Thus ended the Battle of the Camel. It was a battle, the first of its kind, in which the Muslims' swords were turned, not against the infidels but against each other. And they wrought terrible havoc. Out of about 40,000 combatants on both sides, 10,000 lay dead on the battlefield. No pursuit of the defeated enemy was given, otherwise the number of the dead would have been greater. Ali had forbidden his soldiers to pursue the enemy or plunder the inhabitants of Basra. The city opened its gates to the Caliph, though reluctantly, for the number of the Uthmanite party, who hated the regicides, was still great. Hazrat Ali was victorious, but his victory did not strengthen his position very much. In fact, it was the victory of the regicides and of the factious citizens of Kufa, on whom the Caliph became wholly dependent afterwards. Such were the fruits of Hazrat Ali's original hesitancy to take strong measures against the murderers of Uthman. Had peace been made with Talha and Zubayr, his position would have been incomparably stronger.

The Battle of the Camel also revealed the military weakness of the Caliph. He was a brave warrior, but a poor general. He had little or no control over his army. A sizeable portion of his army

was conspiring against his peaceful policy, but he was quite unaware of it. And when the conspirators started hostilities treacherously, he was unable to prevent his army from joining them. His military intelligence was so weak that he did not know anything about the intrigues and plots of the regicides and Sabaites in his army.

Kufa as Capital: The battle of the Camel was, indeed, a victory of Kufa over Basra. After it, the Caliph stayed in Basra for three days. He appointed Abdullah bin Abbas as its governor and left the city for Kufa, which he now made the capital of his Empire. But this change also weakened the position and policy of the Caliph, as the sequel would show. It increased his dependence upon the unruly and rebellious elements of Kufa all the more. In fact, he threw himself in the midst of the equalitarian, and nomadic tribalism of this turbulant city. He had now openly allied himself with the Arab tribes against the Quraysh and the new aristocracy of Islam. It required a masterly leadership to organise and guide these unruly forces, which, however, Hazrat Ali lacked. The transfer of Capital also indicated the increasing importance of the conquered provinces in the politics of the Empire, the decline in the position and prestige of Medina, the holy centre of Islam, the political eclipse of the Companions and their successors in the heirarchy of Islam and the emergence of the new type of leaders among the Muslims. It foreshadowed the end of the Orthodox Caliphate.

CHAPTER 29

CIVIL WAR BETWEEN ALI AND MUAWIYA

657—659 A. D./36—38 A. H.

Relative Position of Ali and Muawiya. It was Ali's misfortune that his victory over one enemy incited another against him. He had always to fight on two fronts. As soon as he returned to Kufa, his new Capital, he had to prepare for a war against Muawiya, who had already defied his authority before. The Caliph was, as we said above, on the point of marching against him, when he had to divert his army against the rebels in Basra. During this time Muawiya remained wisely inactive, awaiting the results of the war between Ali and his rivals. In fact, he could do nothing else. Being a down-to earth realist, Muawiya realised well his difficult and weaker position *vis-a-vis* the Caliph. If Ali had to face two rivals, Muawiya had to guard three fronts, one against Ali on the east, another against Egypt on the west and the third against the Byzantines on the north. His resources in men and material were much lesser and more limited than those of the Caliph. He had only Syrian province to command, while Ali had the whole Empire except Syria under him. Nevertheless, Ali lacked one advantage over Muawiya, namely, political acumen. Muawiya was an astute judge of others' characters, especially of their failings and avarice, of which he took full advantage. Moreover; he was waging his struggle against the Caliph from a position of strength. He had loyal supporters, a disciplined army and a loyal province. He knew how to make the best of his limited resources as well as to sow doubts and distrust among the followers of the Caliph. In other words, he knew how to wage a psychological warfare against his rival. Of these pre-requisites of statecraft, Hazrat Ali was sublimely innocent. Above all, Muawiya could wait, while the Caliph could not. He was ready for a protracted struggle, while Ali was impatient to clinch matters. He could conceal his moves, while everything was open and above board with Ali. Muawiya could plan his moves in secrecy, disclose his aims by stages and raise his ambitions with every success over his rival. He thus forced the Caliph to launch an offensive war against him and then made him retreat into a defensive posture, inflicting upon him in the end humiliations of diplomacy and defeat.

Troubles in Egypt : The tribes in Egypt were mostly in favour of Ali. When the news of Uthman's death reached Fustat, his governor, Ibn Abi Sarh fled to Syria. Ali despatched Qays bin Sa'd bin Ubada as his governor in Egypt. He reached Fustat with

a party of only seven men and was welcomed by the people, except a small party of the Uthmanites, led by Yezid bin Harith al-Kinani. in the district of Kharbita in the Delta. But Qays was a wise administrator. He concluded a treaty of neutrality with Yezid and left him unmolested in his district. Muawiya, whose relations with Ali were rapidly worsening, was disquieted by the advent of such an able administrator as Qays in his rear. He had already, entrapped and killed Muhammad bin Abu Hudhayfa, the predecessor of Qays in Egypt and a pro-Ali governor. He now tried to win over Qays by promises of pardon and large sums of money. Qays, who did not feel his position in Egypt yet secure, did not rebuff Muawiya's advances but endeavoured to prevaricate a clear-cut answer. But when Muawiya pressed his offer of wealth more, he frankly declared his loyalty to Ali. Thereupon Muawiya decided to play a ruse upon him. Through his agents in Ali's court in Kufa, he spread the rumours that Qays was in league with him, and lukewarm in his loyalty to Ali, for which reason he was not fighting with the Uthmanites in Egypt. The rumours at last reached the ears of the Caliph and roused his suspicions. He fell into the trap laid by Muawiya. In order to test Qay's loyalty, the Caliph ordered him to take action against the Uthmanite party of Yezid bin Harith. But he remonstrated against this step. His refusal was taken by Ali as a proof of his complicity with pro-Uthman elements in Egypt. The Caliph at once deposed him and sent Muhammad bin Abu Bakr in his stead. Qays retired to Medina in anger. But Merwan's taunts forced him to go to Kufa, where he explained his policy in Egypt to the Caliph and was again taken into his confidence.

Shifting of Loyalties : Though Qays remained loyal to the Caliph, many others did not. We have already said that Mughira bin Shu'ba who was at first inclined towards Ali, left Medina soon after Ali's election and went to Damascus where he joined Mauwiya. But Muawiya most important gain was that of Amr ibn al-As. He was in Pales tine when Uthman was murdered, which affected him deeply. There he received news of Ali's election, Muawiya's defiance and of growing hostility between Ali and Talha and Zubayr. When heard of Ali's victory over Talha and Zubayr at Basra, he decided to throw his lot with Muawiya, for, as he argued. Ali would never take him into his confidence. So he repaired to Damascus. At first Muawiya was cold towards him, because of his unfriendly attitude towards Uthman. But soon friendship was restored between the two and Muawiya took into his confidence. Their friendship proved momentous in the history of Islam, as later events would illustrate so abundantly.

Correspondence with Muawiya re-opened: The Caliph was reluctant to start hostilities without first giving Muawiya another chance to submit peacefully. A few weeks after his entry into

Kufa, he sent a Bedouin chief, Jarir bin Abdullah al-Bajili, to Damascus with a letter. After describing how he was elected in Medina and won victory over Talha and Zubayr, he called on Muawiya to follow the example of all other Chiefs and leaders of the Empire and take the oath of allegiance. Muawiya detained the messenger for several weeks in Damascus so that he might himself witness the mounting anger of the people against the murderers of Uthman, whose blood-stained shirt was still hanging at the *mimber* of the Mosque of Damascus. At last he returned Jarir to Kufa but with an oral reply that he would submit to the Caliph only on the condition of punishing the murderers of Uthman and on no other. This reply and the eye-witness account of Jarir of the Syrians' anger against the regicides, convinced Ali that Muawiya would not submit to him and that the sword alone would decide between them. So he declared war on Muawiya.

Ali marches against Muawiya. Collecting a huge force, about 65,000 strong, Ali marched towards Syria along the Euphrates. On reaching Upper Iraq, he crossed the river at Raqqa and entered Syria from the north. After marching a little towards Aleppo, he met Muawiya's army in the plain of Siffin. Muawiya had led it from Damascus, as soon as he heard of Ali's departure from Kufa.

Three months of Negotiations: For about three months, May to July, 657, the two armies confronted each orher without coming to blows. In fact, there was a great reluctance on both sides to start hostilities between the two Muslim armies. According to one account, Ali's army numbered 70,000 men, while Muawiya's had 90,000 men. As such, they were biggest armies of early Islam, facing not infidels but fellow-Muslims. But in one way, they represented the ancient hostility between the lands of Syria and Iraq, which had always struggled against each other under their former rulers, the Byzantines and the Sassanids, the Romans and the Persians, and others. The battle of Siffin was the continuation of this historic struggle between Syria and Iraq, now under the dynastic ambitions of Muawiya and Ali on the protext of avenging the murder of Uthman.

Muawiya's army, which had reached in the plain of Siffin first, had taken possession of all approaches to water, for he intended to deny the supply of water to Ali's army. But the latter delivered a determined attack on the Syrians and drove them from the river side. Ali, on his part, did not prevent the Syrians from access to water. Friendly scenes were enacted on the banks of the river, when both the Syrians and the Iraqis came to take water. Indeed, Hazrat Ali was still eager for an amicable settlement with Muawiya. He sent three messengers to him, asking him to submit to the Caliph in the interest of Islamic unity. In reply Muawiya

demanded that the murderers of Uthman should first be brought to justice. His demand was however, stigmatised as a trick to cover his ambition towards independence. So the negotiations ended in failure. Skirmishes then occurred. But fighting was stopped during the "sacred month" of Muharram, 37 A.H./June, 657 A.D. More attempts at peaceful settlement were made, but they too ended in failure. The two parties stuck to their respective demands. Ali insisted on unconditional surrender by Muawiya, while the latter insisted on the punishment of the regicides. On one occasion, a Syrian messenger asked Ali whether Uthman was not unjustly murdered. Being aware of a large number of the regicides in his army. Ali said, "I will not say that he was wrongly attacked, nor will I say that the attack was justified." At this the Syrians declared that they would fight against him and all those who asserted that Uthman was rightly murdered. When Muawiya demanded that the regicides be punished. Ali's messenger asked whether he would put to death even such men as Ammar bin Yasar, a Companion. "Not for the murder of Uthman," replied Muawiya, "but for the murder of a slave of Uthman," "Impossible," they replied, "where will you then stop?" Thus the negotiations ended in failure, as they must. Ali's demand for unconditional submission could not be accepted by Muawiya. Had he offered to compromise, i.e. leave Muawiya in the government of Syria, there would have been some hope of peace between the two. Muawiya's demand for punishing the regicides was within the law of Islam and the custom of the Arabs, which recognised the exercise of the right of revenge by the relatives of the deceased.

Hazrat Ali's position was not so strong as we might otherwise believe. His army was full of all sorts of elements, including several thousand of those who had revolted against Uthman. There were also several thousand 'readers of Quran'. They constantly debated and discussed the dispute over the rights of Ali and their quarrel with the Syrians. Many of them often hinted that their dispute might well be decided by the arbitration of the Holy Book rather than by the arbitrament of the sword. Muawiya had sent spies and secret agents among the soldiers of Ali, who reported to him their internal disputes and discussions. As usual, Ali had no reliable military intelligence in his own army or in that of his rival.

Battle of Siffin: 26-28th July, 657: The month of Muharram ended in fruitless negotiations. The hostilities were renewed, which gradually assumed greater proportions. At last the Caliph made up his mind to start a general and decisive battle. It began on 26th of July. At first Ali's army was pressed back on its right flank. But soon Ali's soldiers, led by Malik al-Ashtar, drove the Syrians back and pressed them as far as Muawiya's pavilion. Ammar bin Yasar died this day and the words of the Prophet that he would die

at the hands of a godless and rebellious race were remembered to the dismay of the Syrians. The sun set, but the fighting continued unabated throughout the night, which came to be known as another "Night of Clangour" ("*Laylat-ul-Harir*") in the military annals of early Islam. The Quran-readers in Ali's army performed prodigies of valour.

When the third day of battle dawned, the two armies were still in deadly conflict against each other. It was a hand to hand combat, with Malik al-Ashtar in the lead. The Syrians were pressed hard. Muawiya was disheartened and was preparing to take to flight, when he consulted Amr ibn al As what to do next. Amr hit upon a stratagem which saved the day for Muawiya and turned the tables upon Ali, who had almost won the battle. On Amr's suggestion, the Syrians stuck up the leaves of the Quran on the points of their lances and stepped forth before the Iraqi army with the cry: "Here is the Book of Allah! Let it decide between us." The stratagem succeeded perfectly. There were thousands of fanatical Quran-readers in Ali's army, who at once took up the cry and declared that they would not fight but decide their quarrel by the Law of the Lord. Ali tried to reason with them, saying that it was a trick of the enemy to cheat them of the victory they were about to win. But the fanatics refused to listen to him. Al-Ashath another Yemeni leader in Ali's army insisted that the Caliph should order Al-Ashtar to stop fighting and accept the Syrian offer, otherwise the Quran-readers would kill him. Thus the helpless Caliph was forced to stop fighting against his better judgment. He then sent Al-Ashath to Muawiya to find out how the Quran would decide between them. Muawiya replied, "It is thus. Each of us would nominate an arbiter, who will decide our quarrel according to the Will of God as revealed in the Quran." The suggestion was accepted by Ali's army.

Nomination of the two Arbiters. The unfortunate Caliph was still more luckless in the choice of his nominee. While Muawiya designated Amr ibn al-As as his representative, Ali intended to nomidate his cousin, Abdullah bin Abbas, as his man. But his unruly soldiers proposed the name of Abu Musa al-Ashari on his behalf. He demurred, for Abu Musa was a neutralist and not fauourably inclined towards Ali. But the soldiers compelled him to nominate Abu Musa. It was another bitter choice they forced on the luckless Caliph. It was then agreed that the two arbiters would meet after about six months at a place between Syria and Iraq. An agreement of arbitration was concluded in writing in which the two arbiters were bound "to follow the judgment of the Quran, and if it was silent, then to follow the acknowledge precedents of Islam".

After the agreement was concluded, the two armies departed to their respective provinces. But the return journey was different for the two. While Muawiya's army returned without any internal quarrel or recrimination, Ali's army was full of mutual quarrels and discords. They clamourously disputed over the agreement of arbitration. Among them the Quran-readers made a complete volte-face. They now came out with the plea that they had been tricked into acceptance of the arbitration of two men in place of the arbitration of the Quran. They proclaimed that "the decision belongs to God alone". By this they meant that the sword should alone decide their quarrel with the Syrians. When the army reached a place called Harura, a day's journey from Kufa, twelve thousand of Quran-readers separated themselves from the main army, and refused to return with it to Kufa. They came to be called the "Harurites", after the place Harura, or "Kharijis", that is, the "separatists" or "seceders". The Caliph sent men to persuade them, but they remained adament in their disloyalty towards him. It was the third humiliation which the Caliph suffered at the hands of his own army. But he took no action against them, hoping that they would return to reason by themselves.

The Court of Arbitration: February, 658: As it was agreed, the two umpires repaired to Adhruh, a place near Ma'an in Palestine, which was formerly a halting-place of the Quraysh caravans to Syria in the pre-Islamic days. It was originally decided that they would meet at Dumat-ul-Jandal. But the Khariji trouble compelled the two parties to shift their randezvous to the west at Adhruh. At the appointed time, Abu Musa al-Ashari, with 400 men and Abdullah bin Abbas as the prayer-leader reached Adhruh, while Amr ibn al-As, attended by 400 men, also arrived from Damascus. A large gathering of notable Muslims, including Muhajireen and Ansar from Medina and Mecca, such as Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, Mughirah bin Shu'ba, Abdullah bin Umar, Abdullah bin Zubayr, also assembled at the place. It was, indeed, one of the most remarkable events in the struggle between Ali and Muawia.*

The Two Arbiters: Before we describe the proceedings of the court, it would be both interesting to say a few words about the two judges, or *Hakamayn*, as the Arabs called them. Abu Musa al-Ashari and Amr ibn al-As were as different from each other as day from night. Abu Musa was the oldest surviving Companion

*The date, the place, the proceedings and the actual sequence of events at this court of arbitration are matters in dispute among the medieval and modern historians. They are, in fact deeply coloured with Abbaside rationalisations. However, the Abbaside historians are our main source of information. Their version is the usually accepted version. We have also given it here first. But modern researchers, especially the Germen orientalist, J. Wellhausen has given us another version, which we have described later.

of the Prophet, while Amr, though a Companion himself, was a much later convert. He might well be described a "forced convert", like most of the Umayyads and other Quraysh leadership of the days of their bitter struggle against the Prophet. But the difference was much deeper than the priority of conversion. The pious Abu Musa belonged to the Orthodox Party, whose influence was on the wane since the death of the Caliph Umar. He was deeply grieved by the growing civil war among the Muslims, but was neutral in the quarrel between Ali and Muawiya. He believed that the choice of a Caliph was the right and privilege of the Companions alone, who constituted a "Shura" or an "electoral college" for this purpose. But in political discussions and dealings, Abu Musa was as simple as a child. He was open, frank and straightforward. As compared to him, his Syrian counter-part, Amr ibn Al-As, was an astute, secretive and scheming negotiator. He knew his mind as well as of his colleague, Abu Musa. He has been dubbed along with Mughira bin Shu'ba and Ziyad bin Sumayya, as the "three cleverest politicians" of early Islam. We might well call them the makers of the Umayyad Caliphate.

The standard version of the arbitration: We begin with the standard version of what happened at the court of arbiters. Before the court met in public, Amr persuaded Abu Musa to meet him in a private conference. A conversation began between them. Abu Musa's method was always to speak his mind first. When Amr remarked that Uthman was wrongly murdered, he agreed. Then Amr said that, being his relative, Muawiya had the right of revenge against his murderers. Abu Musa accepted it also.

"Why then not recognise Muawiya as Caliph so that he might avenge the blood of innocent Uthman?" asked Amr.

At this Abu Musa demurred "I would not even dream of accepting Muawiya as Caliph when there are many among the early converts of the Muhajireen still living," said Abu Musa. "As regards the offer of wealth, you make, I shall not take a dirham as bribe. If you like, you may choose Abdullah bin Umar as the next Caliph."

"If so, why not my son," rejoined Amr.

"No doubt, your son is as pious as Umar's, but he has tarnished his claim by becoming a partisan of Muawiya," replied Abu Musa.

However the conversation revealed to Amr the mind of Abu Musa. He was ready to depose Ali from the Caliphate. "Let us depose both Ali and Muawiya," said Abu Musa in conclusion,

"and let the Muslim community then elect someone instead." Amr okayed this suggestion and the two stepped forth before the assembly to announce their decision.

Amr asked Abu Musa to speak first. Abu Musa stood up and declared: "O people! we have considered the matter well. We see no way out of our difficulty except by deposing both Ali and Muawiya as candidates to the caliphate. After that you shall choose a fit man in their stead." To emphasise his words, he laid down his sword and said, "Lo, I depose Ali bin Abu Talib as I have laid down my sword." He then stepped aside and Amr ibn al-As stood up, and said: "O people! you have heard the judgment of my colleague. He has deposed his man and I accept his sentence. But as regards my Chief, Muawiya, I do confirm him as I make fast this sword of mine." So saying, he fastened his sword to him.

A tumult rose among the people at his words. The Syrians at once hailed Muawiya as Caliph, while the Iraqis poured invectives over the treachery of Amr ibn al-As, and the simple-mindedness of Abu Musa. Peace was preserved with difficulty between the two parties. Abu Musa fled to the sanctuary of Mecca, The Syrians returned to Damascus where they hailed Muawiya as Caliph. But he did not accept this litle for a year or more. The Iraqis repaired to Kufa. When Ali heard of the treachery of Amr ibn al-As, he cursed the names of Muawiya and Amr in his prayers and reluctantly resolved to settle his quarrel with Muawiya by the arbitrament of the sword. The Kharijis found confirmation of their belief and rose in revolt against the Caliph.

Wellhausen's Version: This account is questioned by modern orientalists, especially Wellhausen. There is much in the standard version which is doubtful and even self-contradictory. According to Wellhausen, there was no treachery or dupery on the part of Amr ibn al-As, and the dramatic scene before the assembly did not occur at all. In actual fact, Amr ibn al-As had agreed with Abu Musa to depose both Ali and Muawiya and refer the issue of the Caliphate to a popular election by the Muslim community. An agreement on these lines was drawn up by the two judges and sent to Ali and Muawiya. But Ali refused to accept it. He declared that the arbiters had exceeded their powers, as defined in the deed of arbitration. According to him, their task was to adjudicate between Ali and Muawiya and not against them.

Be it as it may, the fact remains that the court of arbitration had ended in failure and the struggle between Ali and Muawiya remained as unresolved as before the Battle of Siffin. There was, however, one difference. Muawiya's star had risen higher on the firmament of the Caliphate. Before Siffin he was struggling to save

his position as a governor of Syria. But now he was in the run for the caliphate. Before Siffin he would have been contented with the governorship of Syria. But now he contended against Ali for the headship of the whole Islamic Empire. His cause had prospered and his ambitions had accordingly risen higher. None-the-less he was wise enough to postpone for a couple of years public announcement of his caliphate. On the other hand, Ali's difficulties multiplied. He had again to fight on two fronts—against Muawiya in the west and against the Khawarij in the east. And he lost Egypt into the bargain.

Taking a wider view of the whole affair, we may say that the arbitration was bound to fail. There is next to nothing in the Quran of constitutional nature or import, except a few general principles, like "*wa amruhum shoora baynahum*" (and they make decisions after mutual consultation). But such principles supported Abu Musa's stand more than the adjudication between the claims of Ali and Muawiya. In fact, the early Muslims were unaccustomed to Ijma or Ijtihad in constitutional matters. The struggle between Ali and Muawiya was basically a constitutional dispute, whose nature was not properly understood by the participants. They took it in strictly personal terms.

CHAPTER 30

LAST YEARS OF ALI'S CALIPHATE

658—January, 661/38-40 A. H.

During the last two years of his caliphate, the Caliph was now beset with increasing troubles. They were, firstly, the revolt of the Khawarij, secondly, the loss of Egypt and finally, the increasing revolts and raids into Iraq, Persia, and Arabia, which distracted the Caliph and weakened his position. All the while Muawiya was constantly advancing from success to success and encroaching upon the territories ruled by the Caliph. At last a time came when even Ali did not doubt the ultimate victory of Muawiya over the whole Empire. But an assassin's dagger saved the Caliph from the humiliation to witness the crowning success of his great rival. We shall now describe these events which tended towards this denouement.

The Revolt of the Khawarij.

Origin of the Khuwarij: When Ali's army was returning from Siffin, discord and bickering had rent it into pieces. It included several thousands of the Quran-readers. They had compelled the Caliph to accept the arbitration of the Quran, as Muawiya had suggested. But on the return journey, these fanatics changed their opinion and declared that arbitration by men was unacceptable, for, as they put it, "there is no arbitration but that of God alone ("*La Hukma illa lillahi*')." By this they meant that the question of the Caliphate could not be adjudged by a court of arbiters. According to them, Ali was elected Caliph in accordance with the principles of Islam and, therefore, the question of his election could not now be again decided by any human being. Hence they demanded that there should be no court of arbitration at all and the deed of arbitration be cancelled.

When Ali's army reached Harura, a village near Kufa, twelve thousand of these Quran-readers separated themselves from the main army and refused to return to Kufa with it. For this act of separation, they came to be known as the "Khawarij" (singular, *Khariji*, "the one who has separated himself or seceded from the Muslims", as this word implies, being derived from the root "*Kharaja*"—he who went away). They were the original Kharijis. They were also known as the "Haruriyya" or Harurites, after the village where they first "seceded" from Ali's army. But they called themselves as "Shurats", i.e., those who had "sold" their lives and goods

in return for paradise. Ali went to them to expostulate with them. He told them that he accepted arbitration on their insistence, otherwise he believed it to be a trick to cheat them of victory. But they refused to return with him to Kufa, declaring that he should reject the arbitration and repent of it as a sin, or they would fight against him as they would fight against Muawiya. Ali's army returned to Kufa. The Kharijis were left unmolested by the Caliph, who had forbidden any action against them. In fact, both Ali and Kharijis awaited the result of the court of arbitration.

The failure of the court of arbitration confirmed them in the truth of their own secession. They denounced both Muawiya and Ali as infidels and revolted against the Caliph. They chose a leader of their own, named Abdullah bin Wahb ar-Rasibi. He mustered a force of 4,000 Khariji fanatics and marched on Madina with a view to make it the seat of their government by a Council of Representatives. It was to become a model of their theocratic and democratic rule to the ungodly cities all around. But the governor, named Samak bin Ubayd, got wind of their projected attack and repulsed it. The Khariji rebels then marched north, where they captured the town of Nahrawan on the bank of the Tigris.

Beliefs of the Kharijis: The original Kharijis belonged to the Bedouin tribes, mostly of Yemeni origin, especially of the great Tamim tribe. In fact, Kharijism was the unruly nomadism of the Arab tribes, inspired by the Islamic principles of equality and fraternity and looked to the equalitarian, feudalistic tribal system which Hazrat Umar had instituted in the conquered provinces. It was the feudalistic tribalism of Umar that was their ideal. They sought to preserve it as against the emergent big feudalism of the Umayyads of Syria and of Ali in Iraq. They believed that both Ali and Muawiya defended the new aristocracy, the former the aristocracy of Islam, while the later the aristocracy of the Quraysh. Hence they wistfully looked back to the days of Abu Bakr and Umar—the Shaikhayn of the Kharijis—who had established a socio-political system of equality, fraternity, impartiality and social justice. "*Back to Umar*" might well be called their political credo and ideal. They believed that Uthman followed the traditions of his two illustrious predecessors during the first few years of his caliphate. But then he slided into nepotism and favouritism towards his Umayyad clan, which justified revolt against him and his murder. As regards Ali, he was also rightly elected Caliph. But when he accepted arbitration, he too betrayed the trust reposed in him and violated the divine right of being the rightful Caliph. Therefore, he too should be deposed for his blasphemy, if need be, by force of arms.

Ali Marches against the Kharijis: On receiving the news of

the failure of the Court of arbitration. Hazrat Ali summoned the people to a renewed war against Muawiya. After some difficulty, he succeeded again in mustering a force of 65,000 fighting men. He also wrote to the Khariji rebels at Nahrawan to join his army against the common enemy. But the arrogant rebels replied that if Ali would acknowledge his apostasy and repent of it, they would consider his request, otherwise they considered him no lesser an ungodly ruler than Muawiya. As usual, Hazrat Ali turned a deaf ear to their outburst and ordered his army to march towards Syria. But at this time news of Khariji atrocities were brought from eastern Iraq. Among them the most gruesome was the merciless murder of Abdullah bin Khabbab, the son of a Companion and his pregnant wife. They came across the Kharijis who questioned them about Uthman. Abdullah bin Khabbab declared him to be a just Caliph. At this the infuriated Kharijis brutally cut his throat and speared his wife to death. On receiving news of such atrocities, Ali's army refused to march against Syria when a terrible danger lurked behind in Iraq. Ali, himself convinced of this, changed his course and ordered his army to march against the Kharijis.

Battle of Nahrawan: March, 658: One reaching Nahrawan, the Caliph summoned the rebels to return to allegiance and surrender those who had committed murders and atrocities. They replied that "they were all equally responsible for what had occurred and that the blood of the ungodly heretics they had slain was shed lawfully". On further expostulation, nearly half of the rebels either withdrew or came over to Ali's side. Still 1800 of them defied the Caliph. He ordered his force to attack these die-hards, who fought with characteristic bravery. All but seven escaped alive from the battle-field. The battle occurred on 22nd March, 658.

After his victory, the Caliph led his force back to Kufa, believing that Khariji trouble was over. But it was not so. The Kharijis were dead, but not Kharijism. It rose again from the ashes of the martyrs of Nahrowan. It was inspired by the equalitarian, nomadic pietism of the Iraqi tribes. Those of their comrades who had withdrawn from the battlefield spread their beliefs and creed secretly among the restless, nomadic tribes of Iraq. The unending Civil War between Ali and Muawiya provided them with both indignation and fanaticism to solve the troubles of Islam.

When the Caliph called upon his troops to march against Muawiya they invented various pretext to do so. "Our swords are blunted," they said, "our arrows are spent, and we are wearied of warfare. Let us return for a while to sharpen our swords and lances and fill out empty quivers, and then we will march." Thus they gradually slipped out of the camp outside Kufa and returned to their homes, leaving the Caliph alone with a hand-

ful of his supporters. Reluctantly he too returned to Kufa to await a more favourable day.

Loss of Egypt: As we have said above, Caliph had recalled Qays bin Sa'd from Egypt before the battle of Siffin and appointed Muhammad bin Abu Bakr in his place. The new governor was youthful, impetuous and inexperienced. He was resolved to reverse the policy of moderation and neutrality towards the pro-Uthmanite faction at Kharbitta in the Delta. H asked them to accept allegiance to Ali or leave Egypt. They refused, but did not revolt, for they awaited the issue of the battle of Siffin. The indecisive result of this battle and the victory of Muawiya at the Court of arbiters encouraged them to take up arms against Ali's governor. At this stage, Muawiya too decided to throw in his weight against Ali's supporters in Egypt. He commmissioned Amr ibn al-As, to whom he had already promised the governorship of his former province, to march against Muhammad bin Abi Bakr at the head of a force of 4000 men. Ali's governor appealed to him for aid. Hazrat Ali too was awakened to the danger. He sent Malik al-Ashtar to Egypt. But on the way a Christian chief of Qulzum on the Red Sea poisoned him at the instigation of Muawiya. In the meantime, Amr made junction with the pro-Uthmanite rebels in the Delta and advanced upon Fustat. Muhammad bin Abi Bakr vainly tried to resist, but was defeated and murdered in July, 658. Thus Egypt was lost to Ali. Amr again became the governor of Egypt, now joined to Syria. He remained at this post for about eight years till his death during the reign of Muawiya.

Growing troubles of the Caliph: The balance of power had now definitely shifted in favour of Muawiya. But he still did not dare to lead an army against the Caliph. Instead, he adopted an astute policy of "softening up" Ali's powers of resistence by fomenting revolts against him in his own provinces of Iraq and Persia and sending raiding parties into his territories. On his side, Ali constantly but vainly endeavoured to rouse the people of Kufa to war against Muawiya, but to no avail. Troubles were crowding fast upon him.

(*i*) **Revolt in Basra**: After the Battle of the Camel, Hazrat Ali had appointed his cousin, Abdullah bin Abbas, as the governor of Basra. But, when the Caliph asked him to give an account of public treasury, he resigned his post and came to Kufa. Emboldened by this event, Muawiya despatched Abdullah bin Hazrami to provoke a revolt in Basra against the Caliph. There was a pro-Uthmanite faction in the city, especially among Banu Tamim and other Modar tribes. They joined hands with Muawiya's emissary and seized control of the city. The Caliph's representative, Ziyad bin Sumayya, sought his aid. An army under Jariya

bin Qudama marched to Ziyad's help. They defeated Abdullah bin Hazrami's supporters and regained control of the city. Ziyad became the Caliph's deputy in Basra.

(*ii*) **Revolt of Kharrit bin Rashid**: A new trouble confronted the Caliph in South Persia and Bahrayn. It was an anti-tax movement among the Arabs of these regions. Like the Kharijis, they declared that they would not pay Zakat to the ungodly government of Ali, and drove out his *amils* from their regions. They soon got a man, named Kharrit bin Rashid to lead their anti-tax revolt. He was probably a Khariji. He had fought on Ali's side in the Battle of Siffin. But when Ali did not recognise the decision of the Court of arbitration, he fled with many Kufans and other Arabs to Ahwaz in South Persia' and raised the standard of revolt against the Caliph. Many non-Arabs who objected to pay Kharaj and other taxes also joined him. But a Kufan army defeated him. He then fled to Bahrayn, his native place, where he incited the Arab tribes, like Najia, his own tribe and Abd al-Qays, to withhold the payment of tax. This was what they wanted to do. Like the Kharijis he accused the Caliph of letting men to decide in the affairs of God, but also insisted that he should have accepted the decision of the two arbiters regarding the election of a Caliph by the Muslim community as a whole. He justified the popular refusal to pay taxes on the ground that the poor tax, Zakat, was meant for the locality and not for the public treasury. But the Kufan army which had driven him out of Ahwaz, defeated and slain him in Bahrayn and scattered his tribes. The Caliph appointed Ziyad bin Sumayya as his governor in South Persia in 659. He was an able administrator and soon restored law and order in these troubled regions.

(*iii*) **Syrian Raids**: When Muawiya heard of the Khariji and other revolts against the Caliph, he decided to take advantage of them by despatching raiding parties into his territories. He had already taken Egypt and his hands were free to harass the Caliph here and there, for he did not yet dare to launch an organised attack against him. So he despatched expeditions under Nu'man bin Bashir to Ain Tamr, Sufyan bin Auf to Hit and Anbar, Abdullah bin Mas'ada al-Fazari to Tayma and Zahhak bin Qays to Qutqutana. They were however, no more than hit-and-run raids. The Syrians returned home laden with spoils.

A more serious raid was undertaken by Busr bin Artat into Hijaz and the Yemen in 660 A.D., a few months before the death of the Caliph. Busr led a force of 3000 men into Arabia and successively captured Medina and Mecca, from where Ali's governors had fled before him. He heaped insults on the citizens and forced them to acknowledge Muawiya as Caliph, which they did readily. Then he marched South to the Yemen, where Ali's cousin,

Ubaydullah bin Abbas was the governor. He fled to Kufa, The cruel invader put his two infant sons to death and torturned Ali's supporters into submission. The Caliph despatched a force under Jaryia bin Qudama. Busr withdrew from the Peninsula at the approach of the Kufan army, which extracted allegiance to Ali from the terrified citizens of Mecca and Medina. The supporters of Uthman and Muawiya were put to death by Jariya's troops. Thus civil war spread dissolution throughout Arabia. According to Yaqubi, Muawiya himself once led an expedition against Ali and reached as far as the Tigris.

Stalemate or Truce with Muawiya: 660 A.D. These troubles and the disloyalty and disaffection of the Kufans at last broke down the spirit of the Caliph. He had no more desire to carry on hostilities against Muawiya. Yet we are not sure about the exact relations between the two during the last year of Ali's life. The original sources are conflicting. What emerges from them is that in 40 A.H./ 660 A.D., Ali and Muawiya concluded a truce between them. But it did not last long. Soon after, in July, 660/40 A. H.? Muawiya at long last assumed the title of Khalifa at an inauguration ceremony at Jerusalem, for he still did not dare to go to Medina. He made the Syrians to pay homage to him. This act could not be left unchallenged by Hazrat Ali. He again collected a force of 40,000 men to march on Syria. But an assassin's hand prevented him from doing so and his rival got the opportunity to become the Caliph of the whole re-united Empire.

ASSASSINATION OF ALI

The Khariji Plot: To the Kharijis a rightly-elected Caliph was the first prerequisite of Faith and an undeserving one an eye sore, worthy to be put to the sword. Though defeated at Nahrawan and suppressed elsewhere, they yet mourned bitterly in secrecy over the fact that the Islamic Empire was still ruled by the ungodly Caliphs of Kufa and Damascus, as they described Hazrat Ali and Muawiya. Once in 40 A.H., three of them, Abdur Rehman bin Muljam of Murad tribe, Bakr bin Abdullah and Amr bin Bakr of the Tamim, met in privacy. They bitterly lamented over the misfortunes of Islam, by which they meant not the continuous civil war but the ungodly rule of Ali and Muawiya. Then they hit upon a plot to rid the world of Islam at a single stroke of its three great tyrants as they called Ali, Muawiya and Amr ibn al-As. They conspired to kill each of them on a single day, the 17th of Ramzan. Accordingly, Ibn Muljam was to go after Hazrat Ali in Kufa, Bark bin Abdullah after Muawiya in Damascus and Amr bin Bakr after Amr ibn al-As in Fustat. After concluding their bloody pact, the three departed to their respective destinations.

Ibn Muljam in Kufa: Ibn Muljam came to Kufa and stayed in the quarters of Banu Kindah, who were sympathetic towards the Kharijis. One day he met a few men of Temim Ribah whose men had been put to death by Ali at Nahrawan. He fell in love with Qutam, a beautiful woman of Tamim Ribah whose husband and a brother had died at Nahrawan. He proposed marriage to her. She agreed on the condition of giving her the 'mahr' of three thousand dirhams, a slave, a slave-girl and the "head of Ali bin Abi Talib". The plotter, already on this murderous errand, jumped at this offer and accepted it. She introduced him to two accomplices who also were burning to avenge the death of their Khariji comrades.

Attack on Ali: 17.ix.40/25.1.661. On the appointed day, the three assassins went to the Mosque in Kufa early in the morning of 25th January, 661/17th Ramzan, 40 A. H. They hid themselves behind the entrance door. It was the custom of the Caliph to reach the mosque at early dawn, calling upon the people to assemble for prayers. When on this fateful day, he came near the door, the conspirators fell upon him in the darkness of the early morning and wounded him with their poisoned sword. He fell down seriously wounded. Ibn Muljam was seized, the second assassin killed, but the third made good his escape. The Caliph was carried home in a precarious condition. He survived two days more and on 27th January, 661, died of the wounds. Thus died the fourth Caliph of Early Islam. He was then 60 years of age. With him ended the Orthodox Caliphate.

The Caliph was buried in a place the exact location of which is now unknown.

Ibn Muljum was put to the sword for his dastardly act soon after. The other two Khariji conspirators failed in their sanguinary mission. Muawiya was wounded by his assailant in the mosque, but he recovered. He constructed an enclosure or Muqsura around his prayer-place to ensconce himself from future assassins. The third conspirator killed another person in place of Amr ibn al-As, who was ill on that day and had sent him to lead the public prayer in his stead. Both Muawiya's and Amr's assailants were put to death.

A REVIEW OF ALI'S CALIPHATE

Character of Ali: Ali is described as a man of swarthy complexion, which appeared ruddy due to his excellent health. He had large black eyes, thick and long beard, a stout and medium stature, and a powerful frame. He was strong and active in his youth, but grew corpulent and inactive in his later age. He possessed many superb qualities of head and heart. Simple

in dress and food, chivalrous, humane, forbearing and pious in his conduct and manners. Hazrat Ali was kind and considerate towards his friends and magnanimous and forgiving towards his foes. As Muir writes, "Mild and beneficent, he treated Al-Basra, when prostrate at his feet, with a generous forbearance. Towards theocratic fanatics, the Kharijis, who wearied his patience by incessant intrigue and insensate rebellion, he showed no vindictiveness. Excepting Muawiya, the man of all others whom he ought not to have estranged, he carried the policy of conciliating his enemies to a dangerous extreme."

Hazrat Ali was also endowed with great intellectual powers. He was wise in counsel, intelligent, scholarly, eloquent in speech and learned in the science and law of Islam. His three predecessors, Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman consulted him in matters of Islamic law and jurisprudence. He was considered the best jurist among the Companions. He participated in the Shura of his predecessors and acted as Chief Qazi under Umar. Most difficult and knotty questions were referred to him and his verdict was considered final. Many of the welfare schemes of Umar were initiated on his suggestion. His wisdom and learning, eloquence and understanding are illustrated by his speeches, sayings and sermons which have come down to us, and are affirmed by many poems, proverbs and anecdotes of his admirers, in later times. Masudi, a medieval writer, has aptly summed up his character and place in Islamic History in these words: "If the glorious name of being the first Muslim, a comrade of the Prophet in exile, his faithful companion in the struggle for the Faith, his intimate associate in the life and his kinsman; if a true knowledge of the spirit of his teaching and of the Book; if self-abnegation and practice of justice; if honesty, purity, and love of truth; if a knowledge of law and science, constitute a claim to pre-eminence, then all must regard Ali as the foremost Muslim. We shall search in vain to find, either among his predecessors (save one) or among his successors, those virtues with which God had endowed him."

Causes of the failure of Ali as a Caliph: As historians, we have to look to the other side of the picture. As a Caliph, Hazrat Ali was a failure. He failed to ride the storm which rose over the martyred body of Hazrat Uthman: he failed to check the outbreak of civil war—the first civil war in Islam; he failed to preserve the unity of the Islamic Empire and to extend its borders by further conquests; he failed to suppress the first schism in Islam and the rise of the Umayyads on the one side and of the fanatical Kharijis on the other, while he encouraged the emergence of his partisans, the Shia; and lastly, he failed to harness the nomadic tribalism of Iraq to the prosperity and stability of the early Islamic State and society. What were the causes of his failure as a Caliph? We shall

find them in his own person, among his friends and foes and in his times.

(1) *Personal failings of Hazrat Ali.* In spite of the superb qualities of head and heart, Hazrat Ali lacked some qualities essential for a leader, politician and ruler. He lacked the indispensable qualities of leadership, viz. prompt decision, resolution, alertness, foresight, expediency and firmness. He was wise but not sagacious, learned but not a good judge of men, magnanimous but not firm, valiant but not foreseeing. A brave warrior and a good tactician, he was not a great general and a sound strategist. He won battles, but lost wars, whether against Muawiya or against the Khawarij. Being a poor judge of human character—perhaps due to his magnanimous, humane and chivalrous nature—Hazrat Ali always lost good friends and able men, like Mughira bin Shu'bah, Amr ibn-al-As, Qays bin Sa'd, and was left with inefficient ones, like Muhammad bin Abu Bakr or Ubaydullah bin Abbas. Though a good judge and an able jurist, he was too rigid and rigoristic in the application of law and punishment. He himself used to say, "I have no mercy for the evil-doers." Yaqubi writes, "Hazrat Ali would sometimes issue strange orders. He burnt alive the body of a heretic and buried alive two men for breach of peace and order." On becoming Caliph, he ordered Ubaydullah bin Umar to be put to death for the murder of Hurmuzan in early days of Uthman's Caliphate. Ubaydullah fled to Muawiya and joined his army of Siffin.

His most serious failing was his self-complacency, a feeling of superiority, or, in the language of modern psychology, "superiority complex". He prided himself on his birth, his family, his relationship with the Holy Prophet, his learning and understanding of the Quran and tradition of Islam and on his claim to be the sole sucessor of the Prophet. He often asserted that he alone deserved to be the immediate successor of the Prophet. He did not possess that humility and simplicity which characterised Hazrat Abu Bakr, who said after his election "O People, you have elected me to be your ruler, though I am not the best amongst you." It was with such humility and candidness that Abu Bakr and Umar captivated the hearts of their people. The Arabs are a proud race and resent all manifestations of self-pride and airs of superiority. Hazrat Ali lost their fervent allegiance and loyal submission by asserting his claim to be their master. It needed a Persian race, bred in the traditions of monarchist sycophancy, to welcome such superhuman, even divine, claims of superiority by birth or blood. It was this sense of superiority that made him to spurn advice and good counsel by his friends and refuse to consult the Companions, the Quraysh and Ansar dignitaries. Talha, Zubayr, Mughira, Amr

ibn al-As and many others complained that the Caliph did not invite them to his Shura. He asserted that he understood the affairs of the State so well that he did not require theirs or other Muslims' counsels.

Another weakness in Hazrat Ali was his inclination towards inactivity, drift and procrastination. "In compromise," writes Muir, "and in procrastination, lay the failure of his Caliphate. With greater vigour, spirit and determination he might have averted the schism which for a time threatened the existence of Islam, and which has never ceased to weaken it.' His maxim was that if left to themselves things would surely mend. But he did not keep in mind the fact that they might mend themselves *against him*.

(2) *His Foes and Friends*. Hazrat Ali did not know the art of winning friends and influencing people. On the contrary, he had a clumsiness of losing friends and making enemies. It was partly due to his personal shortcomings mentioned above, and partly due to his high standards of statecraft. He alienated the sympathy and support of the influential Quraysh tribe, the aristocracy of early Islam, by not taking them into his confidence after his election, by spurning their advice and counsel, and dismissing many of them from posts of honour and importance. The Uthmanite governors were dismissed soon after his election and replaced by his own nominees, many of whom were his Hashimite relatives, the sons of his uncle, Abbas. Moreover, he confiscated the Qati'a-estates given by Uthman. His strict auditing of public funds lost him many a friend.

(3) *His Times*. But, in the end, we have to bear in mind that he failed as Caliph for he came to power too late. Had he succeeded Umar, rather than Uthman, he might not have failed. Post-Umar days were times of prosperity, expansion abroad and peace at home. No internal dispute or dissension divided the Arabs, while their arms were victorious on all fronts. Ali's love of justice, impartiality, magnanimity and courage would have made him a popular and benign ruler, leading his people to victories abroad and peace and justice at home. But he became a Caliph after the revolt and murder of Uthman. It produced such an upheaval that could be controlled only by a very high level of statesmanship and leadership, foresight and energy which Ali lacked. And he confronted a rival, Muawiya, who possessed all these qualities to a very high degree. His astute rival laid at his door a number of charges which remained, when all was said and done, irrefutable.

1. Muir, *The Cliphate, Its Rise, Decline and Fall*, p. 288.

Why he did not come to the rescue of Uthman in time of his dire need, although he had taken the oath of allegiance to him? By his inactivity, did he not lay himself open to Muawiya's charge that he was in collusion, if not complicity with Uthman's murderers? Why did he not punish the regicides with a strong hand? Why did he tolerate them in his army and among his supporters? Hazarat Ali could, as he did, answer these charges by professing his helplessness, his growing difficulties, created by the plots and revolts of his enemies, especially of Muawiya. There is much truth in his answer. Had Muawiya not disobeyed him, his other rivals would not have dared to revolt against him.

The crux of the matter is that Muawiya was and Ali was not, by his nature, temprament and leadership, attuned to the spirit of the times. The charac'er and genius of the Arab nation had changed. They were no longer the hungry, poverty-stricken, simple and frugal Arabs of the Desert. They had become a people possessing vast lands, immense wealth, and host of slaves, and lived amidt great luxury and comfort. Many of them possessed estates, slaves, mansions and luxuries which their immediate forefathers did not even dream of. Such classes and sections of the new Arab society looked to political leaders like Muawiya who himself possessed all the good things of life to a very great extent and was clever enough to shower the same on others who would support him. He had no scruple to appropriate public moneys for private ends. Nor had many other Muslims. They too were equally ready to accept from him or themselves appropriate public funds for personal enrichment. Muawiya had acquired large estates in Syria and allotted many of them to his relatives, conrtiers and supporters. He had a regular army, disciplined and loyal to his cause. His big feudalism, his loyal army, his wise statesmanship and his knack to win friends and influence enemies were some of his qualities which marked him out as a leader and turned all eyes towards him as the future Caliph, Hazrat Ali had none of these advantages of marching with the time. He was frugal and honest with public funds which made him lose friends and make enemies. But what is more, in his struggle against Muawiya, he fell back upon the tumultuous, unruly factious and retrogressive nomadism of the Iraqi tribes, whose love for equalitarian distribution of public treasury had become a source of political weakness and arrogance rather than of unity and loyalty, as it was under Umar. Had he kept the Iraqi tribalism in check and harnessed it to purposes of political stability and military expansion, he would have been a successful Caliph. But even then the problem that Muawiya posed—the desire of some sections of Arab society to grow more rich than their fellow-Muslims—would have remained

unsolved. He had to master and replace the Iraqi feudal tribalism by the big feudalism of the Qati'a-estates. This was what Muawiya and his Umayyad successors were ready to do. Therein lay the secret of their success against Ali and others who opposed them. The Umayyad Caliphate solved the growing socio-economic and socio-political crisis of the Orthodox Caliphate, which Hazrat Ali was unable to do so. Therein lay the real cause of his failure.

His Influence on Islamic History. But Ali after his death proved to be a far grearer danger to the Umayyads than in his life-time. "Ali dead", writes Hitti, "proved more effective than Ali living. As a canonized martyr he retrived at once more than he had lost in a lifetime." He became the hope of the down-trodden, the hero of the Muslim warriors of all ages, the great Imam of the moderate Shia, and the deity-incarnate of the Extremlst Shia of various hues. As such, Hazrat Ali after his death proved to be a far greater personage in Islamic history than in his own lifetime. This change was, firstly, due to his fickle-minded Iraqi tribes whose troubles multiplited under the oppression and tyranny of the Umayyad estate-holders and administrators, secondly, the anger and resentment of the non-Arab peoples of Iraq and Persia against the Arabism of their Umayyad masters and, thirdly, in the heart-rending tragedies which befell Ali's children and descendants at Kerbala and other battles against the Umayyads. These political oppressions and social injsutice assumed forms of various religious schisms and sects of Medieval Islam during the Umayyad and Abbaside Caliphates.

CHAPTER 31

THE NATURE OF ORTHODOX CALIPHATE

Problem of the origin: The origin of the institution of Caliphate in early Islam is a mattar of controversy among medieval and modern historians and writers. According to some, it was the product of an accident, viz., the election of Abu Bakr in the Saqifa Bani Sa'da, which became a precedent. Others assert that it was a continuation of the tribal custom of electing the chief in a general assembly of the tribe. Yet another group asserts that the origin of the institution of the Caliphate lies in the teachings of Islam itself. There is an element of truth in each of the three views.

(1) **The accidental origin of the caliphate:** As is well-known, the Holy Prophet died without arranging for his succession. He did not nominate anyone to succeed to his functions as the Head of the Republic of Medina which he had built. But someone had to succeed to him, if the unity of the new State and religion was to be preserved. At first, his mourners paid little or no attention to this implication of his death. But soon an event occurred. As we described above, the hurried and accidental election of Abu Bakr at the meeting of Saqifa Bani Sa'idah was unplanned, unforeseen and fortuitous. Neverthless, it became a precedent for subsequent elections, for it implied the consent of the Muslim community, as expressed both in the Saqifa bani Sa'ida, so far as the Ansars were concerned and in the general assembly of the Muslims next day in the Mosque, which confirmed the election the day before. So far as its elective principle was concerned, it remained as fortuitous and undefined as ever.

(2) **Tribal Custom:** According to the European writers, like Arnold, the Caliphate originated from the ancient practice of the Arab tribes to elect their chiefs. According to Arnold, "when a chief of a tribe died, his office passed to that member of the tribe who enjoyed the greatest influence, the leading members of the tribe selecting to fill the vacant place someone among themselves who was respected on account of age or influence, or for his good services to the common weal; there was no complicated or formal method of election, nor within such small social groups would any elaborate procedure be necessary, and when the choice of a successed had been made, those present swore allegiance to him one after another, clasping him by the hand."[1]

1. Arnold, *Caliphate*, p. 20.

Another author, Professor R. Levy, explains how an Arab tribe elected its Chief. He writes, "Chieftainship amongst Bedouins was never restricted to particular families, and it was rare for the headship of a tribe to remain in anyone family for more than a few generations. Those who became chieftains were chosen by popular voice, for their strength of character, courage or experience, and generally at a time of crisis, when war or raiding expeditions were afoot."

There is a great element of truth in this view. It also explains, as Arnold says, why the Prophet did not nominate any one as his successor. He realised that the Arabs had no liking for the hereditary principle in the choice of their chiefs, but left the members of the tribe entirely free to select their own leader. The truth of this view is demonstrated by the procedure of election followed in both cases. The tribal Shaykh was elected in two stages: firstly, a restricted group of leading heads of the families in the tribe chose a prospective-chief. Then the ordinary members of the tribe confirmed this choice by expressing their consent in the Arab fashion of taking the *bayt*, or the oath of allegiance at his hands by holding them in his hands. Exactly the same procedure was followed in the election of all the four Orthodox Caliphs. However, the two stages of designating the new Caliph and confirming his choice had varied in each case. Thus Abu Bakr was chosen in the small caucus of the Saqifa Bani Sa'ida and his choice confirmed by the general assembly in the Mosque when "bayt" was taken at his hands by everyone present; Umar's choice was made by Abu Bakr with the consent of the leading Companions and confirmed by the general assembly of the people, whom the ailing Abu Bakr summoned to his house, and, the oath of allegiance was taken the next day; Uthman's choice was made by the electoral board, appointed by Umar and confirmed by a popular "bayt" afterwards; and, finally, Ali's choice was made by the few leading persons present in Medina at that time and confirmed by the people who then paid homage to him. Much changed on each occasion, but not these two basic features. Even the subsequent Caliphates of the Umayyads and Abbasides preserved these two features, although they changed their spirit and purpose altogether and reduced them to a mere farce or fiction of an election. In fact, it is these two features that made the Orthodox Caliphate a democratic and republican institution. But its democratic nature was merely a continuation of the democratic spirit of Arabian tribalism. Tribalism is essentially a direct democratic, collective way of life. Early Islam embodied and preserved several tribal customs and practices of pre-Islamic Arabian tribalism. The Islamic Ummah or community was, indeed, a "super-tribe", as we have said above. The elective Caliphate was in keeping with this tribalistic nature of the early Islamic community of Medina.

This theory also explains several other features of the early Caliphate, viz., its patriarchal simplicity, the presonal and contractual nature of its sovereignty and political obligation, seniority and other qualifications of the Caliph-designate, etc. We shall dwell upon these features later on. Nevertheless, it does not explain the whole nature of the early Caliphate, which was, on the whole, something far more than a mere tribal chieftainship writ large. It embodied some strictly Islamic features also.

(3) **Islamic Origin of the Caliphate**: The Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet are silent about the Caliphate. The word "Khalifa" is found only twice in the Quran (2: 28 and 38: 25), but that even in a different sense than succession to the sovereignty of Islam. The fact is that the Quran and the Sunnah were mostly silent over constitutional laws and institutions. They contain only a few and general principles of political, rather than of constitutional, import. They are, for instance, mutual consultation among the Muslims about their affairs; or "Obey God and his apostle, and them that have command among you", (4: 62), or, "Listen and obey the Ameer in what he commands", or "the Quraysh are the masters of this affair" (i.e., the headship in Islam), etc. Due to the paucity of Islamic injunctions regarding the structure and constitution of the Islamic State and Government, we find very little direct regulation of the Caliphal constitution by Islam. There were only indirect influences and they even were according to the need of the moment. That the Caliphs were Qurayshites was the need of those times than an Islamic constitutional law.

Lack of political and constitutional provisions in the Quran and Sunnah was a serious lacuna in early Islam, pregnant with subsequent disputes and schisms during and after the Orthodox Caliphate. Politics and religion were one in those days. Had the Quran and the Sunnah been explicit and sufficient in matters of sovereignty, constitution and state-craft, the early Muslims would have successfuly steered off the troubles and civil wars, schisms and sects, which came thick and fast after a decade or two of the Prophet's demise.

Islam had, however, indirect influence on the growth of the early Caliphate. It was through the Companions of the Holy Prophet. They constituted as a sort of "electoral college" of the early Caliphs. Their influence remained great in the early days of the Orthodox Caliphate, but declined during its later period. It was partly due to the passing away of many leading Companions, old age and retirement of others and the internal differences and dissensions among the surviving ones. Yet a tradition survived for some time, namely, that the citizens of Medina, and to a lesser extent, of Mecca, had the privilege of electing the caliphs. But the

emergence of the Umayyad Caliphate at Damascus put an end to this constitutional convention of early Islam.

In short, the origin of the caliphate lay mainly in the tribal customs and habits of the Arabs, guided and influenced by Islam, but indirectly. It was a product of accident rather than of design or of conscious thought or understanding of the constitutional issues involved.

Origin of the titles of "Khalifa" etc. The above view is supported by the origin of the word ' Khalifa" itself. When Abu Bakr was elected as the chief, he gave orders that he should be known by the title of "*Khalifa't-ur-Rasul Allah*" *i.e.*, the "substitute" or "successor" of the Prophet of God. This was a modest title, for it did not imply sovereignty or headship of the State at all, but meant that he was merely to administer the affairs of the Muslim community after the departure of the Prophet. Later, when Umar succeeded Abu Bakr, he too assumed equally modest title of "*Khalifa't Khalifa't ur-Rasul-Allah*"—*i.e.*, the Caliph of the Caliph of the Prophet of God. Though an expressive term, it was clumsy and unwiedly. So the second Caliph shortened it simply to "Khalifa", or caliph, its anglicised form. "In this haphazard manner", writes Arnold, "originated the title which was to describe the ruler of one greatest empires the world has ever seen."

The Caliphs were also known by two other titles, that is the *Imam* and the *Ameer-ul-Momineen*. The first of these titles, the Imam, indicates the religious function of the Caliph, *viz.*, to act as the leader of the public prayers in the Mosque, one of his most important functions, as we shall see later. The latter title, Ameer-ul-Momineen, was first used by Hazrat Umar. He was at first reluctant to do so, due to its high sounding connotation, *i.e.*, the Commander of the Faithful. But he later consented to its use, for it well expressed the military functions of the Caliph, as the supreme commander of the Muslim armies fighting and conquering new lands. However, after Umar had once adopted this title, it became the commonest title. It symbolised power and secular position of the Caliph as against the title of Imam and was more popular among the rulers and the ruled. It was by this title that the rulers of medieval Caliphate were known abroad. It became, for instance, "*miramolin*" in Christian medieval Europe and "*hanmi-mo-mo-ni*" in the 8th century China.

Nature of the Orthodox Caliphate

Nature of the Orthodox Caliphate. Orthodox Caliphate was an elective, republican form of government, in which supreme authority was vested in an elected chief. This was its democratic feature.

There was, however, no regular and well-established procedure and principle of election. Some of the rules which guided the constitutional practice of the Orthodox Caliphs may be summarised here. They are :—

(1) *Equality of all Believers.* Equality of all the Believers is the first principle of the Islamic State. Islam teaches that every Muslim is equal in respect of his obligations and benefits and also as the executor of the Will of Allah. It was in this sense that he participated in the business of the State and was consulted by the early Caliphs. The basis of the Shura or consultative council of the Orthodox Caliphs lay on this principle.

(2) *No Family Government.* The Government of the early Caliphs was not the rule of a particular family or dynasty. The four Caliphs were chosen from four different clans of the Quraysh. They were not related to each other. None of them endeavoured to confine succession within his family. When Abu Bakr nominated Umar as his successor, he pointed out to the people that Umar was not a member of his family. Similarly Hazrat Umar expressly declared that his son, Abdullah, was not to be chosen by the board of six electors, of which he had made him a co-opted member. Hazrat Ali also did not express his consent to the nomination of his son, Hasan, when the people requested him to do so a little before his death. Indeed, this principle was the negative aspect of the principle of the equality of all believers.

(3) *No party system.* The political system of early Islam knew no organised political parties as we know in the present day democracies. There was also no organised opposition, which is the essence of the present-day democratic system. There were, however, temporary alignments of those who held similar attitude or beliefs or had identical interests. It is in this sense that we use this term in reference to the party of the Muhajireen or of the Umayyads, the Shia or the Kharijis. As a matter of fact, political parties of the modern type could not exist in early Islam, when the means of communication were so meagre and tribal parochialism so strong; while there were no such agencies of public opinion as the press. In fact, the politics of Islam was the politics of its capital city, Medina, where some sort of organised political action was possible. That is why the shifting of the capital from Medina to Kufa under Hazrat Ali and from Kufa to Damascus under the Umayyads, had a profound effect upon the policy of early Islam, for it brought about a radical change in the alignment of the political forces. The influence of the Companions and their descendants was supreme in Medina, while that of the Arab tribes in Kufa and of Muawiya's supporters in Damascus.

Elective System of the Orthodox Caliphate: All the four Caliphs were elected in one way or another. Really speaking, it was a peculiar system of election, for it was virtually a kind of indirect election. It consisted of two stages, *viz.*, the choice of a new Caliph and its confirmation by the *Bayt* or oath of allegiance by the people present.

(1) Choice of a new Caliph was made by one or more of the leading Companions or personages in Medina. Thus Abu Bakr was really chosen by Umar and Abu Ubaydah; Umar was chosen or nominated by Abu Bakr; Uthman was chosen by Abdur Rahman bin Auf and his fellow members of the electoral board, and Ali was chosen by the leading personages and the rebel-leaders in Medina after Uthman's murder. These Companions and leading personalities acted as a sort of an electoral board of Elders, the *Shura*. What is remarkable about their choice was that it had to be unanimous and positive. Once the choice was made, no difference of opinion or opposition was permissible to those who were at first opposed to it. That is why Hazrat Ali, who was at first reluctant to pay homage to Abu Bakr, and later to Uthman, readily accepted the choice once it was announced. Opposition parties could not exist in early Islam. Later on, these leading personalities came to be called *Ahl ai-Ikhtiyar* (people of authority) or *Ahl-ul-Hal val Aqd* (people to "loose and bind" jurists (*faqihis*) by the Medieval Isiem.

(2) *Popular 'Bayt'*. After the Companions had made public their choice, the Muslim community had to follow suit, and was asked to confirm the choice by taking the *Bayt* or oath of allegiance at the hands of the Caliph-designate. This procedure was exactly like that of the homage paid to a new chief by the tribe as a whole. After the popular oath-taking was over, the newly-elected Caliph rose to deliver his inaugural address, in which he briefly outlined the policy he would be following during his Caliphate.

The people had also no power to oppose the choice of a new Caliph, or refuse the oath of fealty to him. Such an opposition or refusal, if made, was tantamount to revolt which justified use of force against those who opposed or refused. To this extent, Hazrat Ali was justified in taking up arms against Muawiya when he refused to pay homage to him. It was, however, a responsibility of the electors to take into view the opinions of those who might oppose or refuse their choice and endeavour to secure their consent before public announcement of their choice was made. Thus Abu Bakr consulted those who were reluctant to accept Umar as his successor and convinced them of the merits of his choice. Similarly Abdur Rahman bin Auf spent a sleepless night to enquire the opinions of all the people in Medina before he finally made his choice. It was asserted that in extreme cases, the people had a right to refuse or

withdraw their allegiance, once given. It was on this basis that Talha and Zubayr revolted against Ali. This right was, indeed, the main point in the political philosophy of the Kharijis. On this basis they asserted that the Muslims had the right to revolt and depose an unjust and evil-doing Caliph, and if need be, kill him. But this right to revolt or oppose was never universally accepted, as it could not be, if the unity and stability of the State were to be preserved.

The elective system of the Orthodox Caliphate possessed several merits. It made the early Islamic State democratic, popular and republican. But its merits were strictly conditioned to the tribal environment and its limitations under which it arose.

Composition of the Electoral Board not well-defined. First of all, there was no consistency and continuity in this system of election. They are the defects which prove most disastrous for any constitutional system. Neither the composition of the Board of Electors nor the qualifications of electors were well defined and well-established. It might consist of two electors, as in the case of Abu Bakr, or of one, as in Umar's case, or six as in Uthman's case, or of an unknown number of person, as in Ali's case, among whom there were even rebels and regicides. This lack of definite composition and qualifications of electors enabled Muawiya to tamper with it to the extent of changing its very spirit. He transformed the elective system into a hereditary one. It was, indeed, an easy affair, for, as Wellhausen has remarked about Uthman's election, "the Shura, the electing body, did not, by any means, consist of the whole of the Muslims. The provinces were not consulted; Medina alone was the 'Polis' and in Medina the Ansars in general were of little account, as also were the Quraysh as a whole".

No right to Vote. The democracy of the Orthodox Caliphate was a tribal democracy. It was not based on the right to vote but on the duty to take the Bayt or the Oath of allegiance. It was a system meant not to elicit popular will but to create a uniformity of popular consent in a community in which opposition was not permissible or possible. The "bayt" was the tribalistic feature of the political structure of the Caliphal State, which made it patriarchal, personal and contractual in nature. It was also the basis of its paternalistic character, so idealy manifested by the caliphate of Umar. Allegiance and loyalty were based on person-to-person oath-taking by the people at the hands of their rulers. Thus sovereignty and political obligation were not really territorial but personal. In a tribal society, as the Islamic State was at first, its personal and contractual characteristics were a source of strength and stability. But when the Islamic Empire was founded, these

1. J. Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and its Fall*, p. 40.

features became a source of weakness and instability. The reason was that law and order in a territorial empire could best be preserved by an impersonal and coercive authority rather than on a contractual and personal relationship between the rulers and the ruled. A theory of social contract can always be used as a justification of revolt whenever a section of the people believe that the ruler or rulers have not fulfilled their part of the contract. This was the real reason of the revolt of the Arab tribes under Uthman and of Muawiya, of the Kharijis and others against Ali. In spite of this weakness, the Caliphal State never grew out of its contractual, patriarchal and tribal character, whether under the Orthodox, Umayyad or Abbaside Caliphs. It remained stunted and rudimentary in its basic character. However, it was shorn of its democratic, elective and republican features by the Umayyad and the Abbaside Caliphs.

CHAPTER 33

GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE ORTHODOX CALIPHATE

The organization of the Central Government under the Orthodox Caliphs was simple. It had no governmental departments or agencies. It consisted of the Caliph, who was the Head of the State, a Shura or a consultative council, and a few secretaries, to help the Caliph in certain specified duties of the State.

The Caliph. The Caliph was the supreme Head of the State, elected by the people in the manner described above. There were no constitutional or political restrictions on his authority. But it was not unlimited, or autocratic, for the caliph had to exercise it within the laws and injunctions of the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Later, it also became binding on the Caliph to follow the traditions of the first two Caliphs, Abu Bakr and Umar.

His Powers and Functions. The Orthodox Caliph was not an autocratic ruler. His powers were determined by his religious and temporal functions. Though he succeeded to the place, occupied by the Prophet before, he did not exercise all of his powers. The Holy Prophet was at once a prophet or a messenger of God, a head of the State, the chief judge, the supreme commander and a law-giver. Thus he combined in him both prophetic and political, spiritual and secular powers. The Khalifa, as his successor, did not succeed to the whole plenum of his powers. Being the Last of the Prophets, he could not be succeeded by any one in his prophetic and spiritual functions, but only in his political, religious and secular ones. "Succession to Muhammad meant succession to the sovereignty of the State". Caliph's functions may be summarised as religious, political, legislative, administrative, judicial and military.

His Religious Functions. Though the Caliph had no prophetic function at all, yet he performed several religious duties. Indeed, his religious functions determined his secular position and power. In the exercise of his religious functions, he acted as a guide rather than as a law-giver. His religious as well as his secular powers were meant to guide the Muslims in the observance of the Quranic laws and prophetic traditions. He conducted the business of the State within the limits laid down by the Quran and the Sunnah. His chief religious functions were to lead the public prayers in the Mosque of the Prophet, *i.e.*, to be the *Imam* and deliver the Khutba

at Friday prayers. In fact, *Imamat* or leadership of public prayers was the hall-mark of religious and political leadership in Islam. The Caliph's representatives in the provinces, the governors and military commanders, performed this function in their own areas in the same manner as the Caliph did in Medina. Its performance was an induction into their official position.

In spite of his religious duties and functions, the Caliph was no Pope. He had no authority to change or innovate any principle or precept of Islam, as laid down in the Quran and Sunnah. He had to act within the limits set by the Quran and the Sunnah. In this respect, his position was not much different from any other Muslim who could also interpret the Quranic injunctions.

Other Powers. The Caliph was the Head of State. He was the supreme commander of the Islamic armies. He sent armies against foreign States, appointed commanders, and even instructed them in the conduct of hostilities, as Umar did. The Caliph usually consulted the Companions and advisers in the choice of his military commanders as well as in undertaking new military operations and in the despatch of Muslim armies.

Though diplomatic relations between various states and empires did not exist in a permanent manner in those days, the Caliph sent emissaries to foreign countries and received foreign emissaries, if need arose. The Caliph also acted as the chief judge. All judicial functions of settling disputes were performed by the Caliph, or by his governors and commanders in the provinces. Lastly, the Caliph supervised the collection of revenues, looked after the construction of canals, and other public works, and even issued new coins. In fact, *Khutba* (Friday Sermon) and *Sikka* (issue of coins) were two privileges and symbols of the authority of the Caliph. However, the Orthodox Caliphs consulted their Shura, especially the first two Caliphs, in the performance of their functions and powers.

The Shura

Another democratic feature of the Orthodox Caliphate was its consultative body, called the *Shura* or *Majlis-e-Shura*. The Caliphs consulted it in all matters of State. A Quranic verse had enjoined the Muslims "to consult their affairs among themselves". The Prophet consulted his Companions in matters not within Quranic revelations. In this respect he followed the Arab tribal custom, according to which the tribal chief consulted the leading figures in his tribe or clan in matters of war or peace. For this purpose, a Majlis existed in Arab tribes, which consisted of the heads of the families and representatives of clans within the tribe.

Its Composition: No definite rule or law regulated the composition and membership of the Shura. Usually it comprised the Chief Companions among the Muhajireen. But sometimes the leading figures among the Ansars were also co-opted. On special occasions, even ordinary citizens of Medina or the visiting dignitaries of the tribes or provinces, were also summoned to a meeting of the Shura. Thus we may say that Shura was at once an executive council, a secretariat of the Caliphs, a consultative council and a general assembly of the citizens and visitors of Medina. In this sense, it combined executive and legislative functions of the Caliphal State.

Its Functions: As its composition shows, the Shura was a multi-purpose organization. It advised the Caliph in the performance of his various duties, such as the despatch of armies, choice of commanders, governors and other officials, fixing the salary of the soldiers, establishment of new offices, etc. It was, however, not a sovereign legislative body. Like the Caliph, it too had no power to change Islamic law or contravene the injunctions of the Quran and Sunnah. Indeed, a sovereign legislative organ of the State was foreign to the spirit of early Islam. Law was already revealed in the Quran and examplified in the Sunnah of the Prophet. The function of the Shura, as also of the Caliph or of any other Muslim, was to discover or derive it by interpreting the verses of the Quran and the *hadiths* of the Prophet.

Its procedure of work was simple. If the advice of the leading Companions was sought by the Caliph, he consulted them in the Mosque, where they were always present. But if public consultation was felt necessary, a man was sent through the streets of Medina calling people to the prayers. When assembled, a brief prayer was observed and then the business of the general Shura began. First, the Caliph spoke, putting the question before the assembly and seeking its advice. Every member had the right to speak. A free exchange of opinion took place. But decision was not made by counting votes or by shouting "ayes" and "noes", as in present-day legislatures. They usually accepted the opinion of the Caliph or the general consensus of opinion among its members.

Its *ad hoc* nature: The Shura was really *ad hoc* in its nature, as indicated by the lack of definite rules regarding its composition, functions and procedure. Its meetings were not held regularly under set rules, but depended upon the wishes of the Caliph. That is why the Shura worked well under a Caliph like Umar, who summoned it whenever he was confronted with an important task. But it ceased to meet regularly under his successors, Uthman and Ali Uthman dispensed with it during the last years of his Caliphate, when he began to rely more on his relatives than on the advice of the Com-

panions and citizens or Medina. Hazrat Ali also did not summon it regularly, for he relied more on his own decision than on the advice and consultation of the Companions and citizens of Medina. It was one of the grounds of complaint by Talha and Zubayr that he did not consult them in the business of the State. In short, the Caliphate of Umar was the hey-day of the democratic institutions, like the Shura. They gradually declined under his two successors and then vanished altogether under Muawiya and his Umayyad successors.

Secretaries: There were no departments of the State under the Orthodox Caliphs. The administration was conducted under the direct personal supervision of the Caliph But as the duties and functions of the Caliph increased, he secured the help and co-operation of a Companion or a citizen in various works of the government. Thus Umar acted as the Chief Judge under Abu Bakr. Ali was entrusted with the work of correspondence. Another Companion presided over the equipment of the troops. As in the days of the Holy Prophet, the secretaries and assistants of the Caliph worked in the courtyard of the Mosque of Medina.

Provincial Administration

Before Umar, there was only a rudimentary provincial administration in the Peniusula. Under Umar a vast empire was conquered. He divided the Empire into eleven provinces and placed each of them under separate governors for proper administration and development of their respective regions. They were the five provinces of Arabia, viz., Medina, Mecca, Yemen, Hadramawt, and Uman; three provinces of Persia, viz. Ahwaz or South Persia, which included Bahrayn as well, Sistan, Mekran and Kerman or Eastern Persia, and Tabaristan and Khurasan in North Persia. Syria comprised one province, divided into four districts or junds. Palestine was a separate province, divided into two districts of Ayla and Ramlah. Egypt was also a single province, divided into two districts of Lower and Upper Egypt Each of these Provinces were futher divided into districts for military and financial administration. It may be remarked here that Umar preserved the territorial boundaries of the former Byzantine and Sassanid provinces with minor adjustments.

Provincial Officials: the Governor: Every province was under a Governor who was designated Ameer or Wali, as in the days of the Prophet. He was appointed by the Caliph after consultation with his Shura. Hazrat Umar was very careful in the choice of his governors and other officials. He kept in view the qualities of the nominee, the wishes of the people over whom he was appointeo and the advice of the Shura. Whenever a new governor was appointed,

he was required to give a detailed information of his property and belongings, so that a watch might be kept on his income during his tenure of office. If a governor was found to amass unaccountable wealth, it was confiscated. At the time of his appointment, the Caliph instructed a new Governor in his duties thus: "Listen, you are not appointed to rule over the necks of the people, but to guide them in the path of righteousness. Render unto the Muslims their rights. Do not beat them Do not place guards at your gates so as to shut the people from approaching you. Do not shut your doors against them, lest the strong amongst them devour the weak ones."

Duties: The Governor was a representative of the Caliph in the Province. He performed all those functions in his area as the Caliph did in Medina. He was the leader of the prayer, and read Khutba in the name of the Caliph at Friday prayers. He maintained peace and order in his province. He commanded the army stationed in his province, and sometimes himself led the military expeditions. He was also a judge, except when judges were appointed. He was to supervise the collection of taxes in his province and was in charge of the provincial treasury. However Hazrat Uthman appointed a Treasury Officer who was, made directly responsible to the Caliph for his work.

The Governor resided at the provincial headquarters where a Government House, *Dar-ul-Imara*, was constructed beside the principal mosque. The Governor was assisted by a Katib or secretary to assist him in the departmental work.

The Amils: Each district had a District Officer, called the Amil. He was mainly concerned with the collection of land-tax or Jizya in his district.

Qazi: Hazrat Umar was the first to appoint separate judicial officials. Formerly judicial work was performed by the Governor. The Qazis or judges were chosen by the Caliph from among such Muslims who were well-known for their integrity and knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah. The Caliph prescribed the rules of procedure and evidence in settling disputes. Mosques were used as courts and no fees were charged for deciding cases. A judge was required to follow the injunctions of the Quran in deciding cases; if it was silent on the issue, the Sunnah of the Prophet. If it too was silent, the Ijma or collective opinion of the learned Muslims. If it was also not available, he should decide the matter according to his individual opinion, called Qayas or Ijtihad.

Police. In general, the security of life and property was the responsibility of the tribal chiefs. In cities, like Medina, Hazrat

Umar had introduced night-watches and patrols. But in the newly-founded cities and towns, where a growing population lived amidst conditions of rapid change, the tribal authority was sometimes weak or partisan to be effective, and night-watchmen too few to restrain trouble-makers and evil-doers. Hence a police force was set up to maintain law and order in these settlements. It was called *ash-Shurta*. It was a sort of para-military force. It was first instituted in Kufa by Ali, and in Damascus by Muawiya. In Kufa, for instance, the Shurta consisted of several thousand specially armed men, under the command of an officer, callad *Sahib-ash-Shurta* or the Commandant of Police.

Caliph Umar was also the first to set up prisons, which were unknown to Arabs before. He established a prison in Medina and in each of the provincial headquarters.

Revenue Administration.

As we have said above, Islam sanctioned five sources of revenue to the State. They were: Zakat, Jizya, Kharaj, Khums, and Ushr. In the days of the Holy Prophet and also of Abu Bakr, the sources of State income were too meagre to be organised into a regular system of administration. They were promptly distributed among the people as soon as they were received. But with the great conquests under Umar and the vast expansion of the Islamic Empire, they rapidly increased in volume and regularity, which necessitated a more systematic organisation. Consequently Hazrat Umar undertook the task of organising revenue administration on the principles of Islam and the precedents of the Prophet and Abu Bakr. He also introduced new taxes like Ushur. Thus to the five traditional sources, new sources of income were added.

Zakat: Next to the prayers the payment of Zakat is a commandment of the Quran: "perform the prayers and pay the poor-tax". (Sura 2 : 40.) It is, indeed, a poor-tax, levied on the men of means for distribution among the poor and the needy. The idea behind it was this: private property in early Islam was considered as a sin till it was "purified" by the payment of Zakat. Its payment was absolutely obligatory upon every Muslim. Abu Bakr refused to exempt its payment even in the face of a revolt and apostasy by the Bedouin tribes reluctant to pay it. Both he and Umar framed strict rules to regulate its collection and safeguard those who had little or nothing to pay. But all men of means had to pay it at the rate of 2½% of their flocks, herds, gold, silver, money and other possessions. The Prophet had exempted horses from the levy of Zakat in order to encourage the Muslims to rear this useful animal, which was scarce in Arabia in his days. But, with the great expansion of the Empire, supply of horses became abundant. So Hazrat

Umar imposed Zakat on horses as well.

Jizya: Another source of revenue was the Jizya or capitation-tax, imposed on the non-Muslims, called Dhimmis. It was, indeed, a tribute on head, *trebutum capitis*, known throughout antiquity. It was a tax imposed on the vanquished as a symbol of their submission and protection by their conquerors. Under the Prophet, jizya was levied at the flat rate of one dinar per head per annum. But Umar varied the amount of Jizya in view of the fact that a similar tax in the Persian and Byzantine Empires was graduated. He, therefore, prescribed it at the rate of one dinar (or 10 dirhams; where this silver currency circulated, as in Persia) a year for men of low income, two dinars (or 20 dirhams) a year for men of medium income and four dinars (or 40 dirhams) a year for rich men. In Egypt, Amr ibn al-As imposed a uniform Jizya of two dinars in cash and two dinars in kind on the Copts. But the poor, the mendicants, monks, women, children and the priests were exempted from its payment. As the condition of Jizya was the guarantee of military protection by the Muslims, it was not collected, if the Muslims were unable to guarantee protection of the Ahl-ul-Dhimma or the people of protection. If a Dhimmi revolted against the Muslims, his Jizya was cancelled and protection withdrawn.

Kharaj: The third source, which also became the most important source of revenue, was the Kharaj or land-tax, *tributum soli*. It was imposed on all the lands left in the possession of their non-Muslim owners after their subjugation by the Muslims. The Prophet had imposed this tax on the Jews of Khyber, etc. But the vast conquests under Umar required a thorough re-consideration of the whole question of the conquered lands and Kharaj.

Discussion in the Shura. Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, the conqueror of Iraq, wrote to the Caliph to permit him to distribute the conquered lands among his victorious soldiers like other spoils of war. It was, indeed, a custom that all the spoil of war, including men, women and children, their properties and possessions captured by the Muslim armies were treated as war-booty and distributed among the soldiers after deducting the fifth share of the State, called the Khums. As they had now conquered the lands of the Persian landlords and cultivators, Sa'd like other military commanders, requested the Caliph that like other spoils of war, these lands should also be distributed among the soldiers. However, Hazrat Umar was not in favour of this request. The Muslims, he said, had conquered the vast lands of the Chosroes, the like of which they would not conquer ever after. If these lands were once distributed among the conquering soldiers, no more lands would remain to be distributed among the future generations, or to maintain garrisons and troops in conquered provinces against internal rebels and external enemies.

He was, therefore, of the opinion that these lands should not be apportioned among the Muslim soldier, but should be left in the hands of their non-Muslim owners on the condition of payment of a tribute. With this view, he first consulted the Companions, like Abdur Rehman bin Auf, Ali, Uthman, Talha and his son Abdullah ibn Umar. All except Abdur Rehman bin Auf finally agreed with the Caliph's opinion. Then the Caliph summoned ten Ansarites to his Shura and, in a speech before them, explained his opinion to them and the views of his critics. The Caliph quoted the Quranic verses, declaring that the spoils of war also included not only the share of the conquering soldiers but also 'of those who come after them (Sura 8: 59 and 49: 7). He then added that if all the conquered lands were distributed among the soldiers now, no share would remain to be given to the coming generations, At this all present accepted the Caliph's opinion and decided that the conquered lands be left with their non-Muslim owners on the condition of paying a land-tax. At the same time, the Muslims were forbidden to acquire lands in the conquered provinces or to take to agriculture.

Umar's Settlement of Iraq. After this decision the Caliph proposed that now the need was to survey the lands of Iraq so that the land-tax upon them might be properly assessed. On his enquiry, the name of Uthman's bin Hanif was suggested. The Caliph sent him to Lower-Iraq or as-Sawad, for the survey of the lands and assessment of the Kharaj upon them. Uthman bin Hanif performed his work with characteristic thoroughness. All the lands in Iraq were surveyed and assessed by a team of co-workers, under his direction and the report was submitted to the Caliph, who accepted it. Accordingly, more than 30,000 square miles of land were surveyed, of which cultivable land alone was 36,000,000 jaribs (one jarib was 3,600 square yards). The land-tax was assessed at various rates, as determined by the quality of the soil, the nature of produce, the character of the holdings, the availability of irrigational facilities, etc. "It was" says You Kremer, "a thoroughly just principle of assessing the taxes according to the nature of the soil and the mode of its cultivation." Assessed in this manner, lands cultivated, for instance, with barely were taxed at two dirhams per jarib per year, with wheat at four dirhams, with sugar-cane at six dirhams, planted with trees at ten dirhams, vegetables 3 dirhams, grapes or dates 10 dirhams, meadow-lands 5 dirhams, etc. Besides the tax in money, these lands were also assessed *in natura*, *i.e.*, as many Qafiz per jarib as dirhams, on the principle that "For every jarib a Qafiz and a dirham" had to be paid (one *Qafiz* is=about 32 kilograms). Of course, lands of inferior quality were taxed at a lower rate. In the first year of survey, the revenue of Iraq was, 8,60,00,000 dirhams, But a few years later, *i.e.*, in the last years of Umar's reign, it increased to 10,00,20,000 dirhams.

Kharaj in Egypt and Syria. When other lands, like Syria, Egypt and Persia were conquered, they were assessed in the manner as existed at the time of the conquests subject to the varying condition of agriculture in Syria, Egypt, etc. In Egypt, for instance, the land-tax on the average was one dinnar and three irdabs (one *irdab* is equal to 164 kilograms) of grain per jarib. The total Kharaj of Egypt was about 1,20,00,000 dinars a year. In Syria it was equal to 1,40,00,000 dinars a year.

Agrarian development measures. In order to promote agriculture in the conquered lands, Caliph Umar undertook several plans of development. Irrigational canals were dug, dams and dykes constructed, waste and marshy lands reclaimed, and other facilities provided to the non-Muslim cultivators and landlords. Moreover, for official records, the former languages of the region, continued in use. Thus the Pahlvi in Iraq and Persia, Syriac and Greek in Egypt were the financial languages of the respective provinces.

Ushr. Before the Shura of Umar had forbidden the acquisition of lands by the Muslims, many conquered lands were allotted to them. The Muslim land-owners paid a tax on their lands which was called Ushr, for it was one-tenth of the produce of the land. Many big Muslim land-lords paid fairly large sums as Ushr. But the prohibition to acquire lands galled many of them. First under Uthman and latter under the Umayya's they got this ban lifted. Thus the way to the emergence of feudalism proper was opened with the accession of the Umayyad to power—a factor which contributed to their rise.

Al-Fai. Another identical source of revenue was the "Fai" lands. All the lands in the conquered provinces, which were deserted by the Persian King, princes and nobles, or Greek pataicians, or were the crownlands, lands endowed to fire temples, lands confiscated from the rebels or lands reserved for road-making, and for the maintenance of bridges, postal service or forest lands, were declared to be the property of the Islamic State. They were called the "Fai" lands. In respect of these lands, the State was the landlord and took a share of the produce from its tenants. It earned a large sum from them, which amounted to 70,00,000 dirhams. It was utilized for constructing public works, like canals, dams, tanks etc. The State could give the Fai-lands to Muslims. Hazrat Uthman alloted Qatia-estates from the "Fai" lands to several Qurayshite nobles during his Caliphate, which was one of the grounds of grievance against him. Thus the Fai-lands became the open sesame to the emergence of Arabian feudalism. The Muslim landlords of of Qatia-lands paid ushr tax. Hence it was difficult to distinguish ushr-lands from Fai-lands.

Khums. The Ghana'im or the spoils of war captured by the Muslims on the battle-field were distributed among them after deducting one-fifth share of the State, called al-Khums. During the wars of Conquests under Abu Bakr and Umr, it was an important source of income. It was divided into three portions, as required by the Quran. But the share of the Prophet's relatives was now spent upon the equipment of the Muslim army.

Ushur. Finally, Caliph Umar imposed a new tax, called Ushur. It was a tithe imposed on the mercandise of non-Muslim merchants, which was tax-free before. It was reported to the Caliph that while the Muslim merchants paid 10% tax on their articles of trade, the non-Muslim merchants paid none. The Caliph ordered that the non-Muslim merchants should pay half-of-the-tenth or Ushur as the tax on their articles of trade. A considerable sum thus accrued to the State from this new tax. But it was stipulated that goods worth less than 200 dirhams were to be free from payment of Ushur.

A Review. This brief survey of the taxation system under the Orthodox Caliphs, reveals justice and public well-being of this system. For instance, the Ushar paid by the Dhimmis was half of the Ushr which the Muslim merchants paid. It was organised for the well-being and betterment of the Muslims. Umar's Register of Pensions ensured that the State revenues would be utilized for the benefit and well-being of all the Muslims on principles of service, allegiance and priority in adopting Islam.

However, the revenue system of the Orthodax Caliphs was subjcct to conflicting tendencies soon after Umar's death. The Arab tribes demanded a greater share in the Bayt al-Mal, especially the demand to allocate the income of the Fai-lands to them. Further, in spite of Umar's prohibition to Muslims holding landed properties in conquered provinces, Uthman began the practice of allotting these lands as Qati'a-estates to his kinsmen, the Qurayshite nobles and others. For instance, he granted the Crown-lands in Syria to his cousin Muawiya, with which the latter equipped his troops. "Uthman", writes Von Kremer, "acceded to the request of his cousin and with it the entire crown-lands of Syria were for ever lost as national property." He also tried to allot estates to his kinsmen in Lower Iraq or Sawad. But this became a cause of grievance against him and led to the revolt of the Muqatila. However, this dispute remained unresolved even after Uthman's murder. With the emergence of the Umayyads to power, the revenue system of early Islam was greatly modified.

Fiscal System : the Bayt al-Mal. Before Hazrat Umar, the

1. Von Kremer, Orient under the Caliphs, p. 125.

Bayt al-Mal was the name of a practice of distributing the State revenue rather than a fiscal institution. The income was so meagre that it was distributed among the people present as soon as it was received. But with increasing revenues of the State, Umar found it necessary to collect them under the supervision of State officials. He was, therefore, the first Caliph to institute the Bayt al-Mal or Public Treasury, in the capital and in provincial headquarters. The first Public Treasury was established in Medina in or about 15 A.H./ 636 A. D., under the supervision of Abdullah bin al-Arqam, as *Sahib-al-Bayt-al-Mal.* Chief Treasury Officer, and his two assistants. Later, public treasuries were set up in all the provincial head-quarters. Out of the receipt of a provincial treasury, the expenses and salaries of provincial administration and public works were first disbursed, and the surplus was forwarded to the Central Treasury at Medina. The provincial treasury officers were at first responsible for their work to the provincial governor. But when a governor misappropriated public funds, Uthman made the treasury officers directly responsible to the Caliph.

Military Organisation under Orthodox Caliphs

In the beginning of the Orthodox Caliphate, the Arabs possessed nothing in the art of warfare except their martial spirit and discipline. But at the end of it, they had everything of military organization, weapons and logistics, and had perfected their art of warfare. Thus they became the greatest military power of their times. Let us see how this transformation came about.

Tribal Raids and Razzias of Pre-Islamic Arabia:

As we said above, there was much that was spontaneous in the history of Isiam, *i.e.*, that which was not the result of conscious thought and effort, but a natural and spontaneous response to the social environment and milieu in which they lived. This was particularly true of the Arab's art of warfare. They acquired it in course of their endless tribal raids and razzias during the furious tribal wars of the Jahiliya. These raids and razzias were really the training grounds and drill-parades of the warriors of early Islam. There the Arabs learnt to take full advantage of their desert environment, the mobility of their war-animal, the camel, the stealthy march across the desert and its dry valleys, the surprise attack delivered suddenly at the break of the day and quick retreat before the enemy recovered and regrouped his forces. This mode of fighting also taught them courage, fortitude and endurance in the face of the hardships of the desert warfare, with marches that were always arduous and rations that were always short. Such were the men and materials out of which the Prophet and the Caliphs forged the mighty warriors and conquerors of early

Islam.

Prophet's Training: The battles of the Holy Prophet trained the brave tribesmen of Arabia into a disciplined and organized force. Before him, the Arab method of fighting was disorderly and unorganised. The raiding tribe attacked as an unorganised mass, with each fighter shouting and brandishing his weapons furiously without any co-ordination with his comrades. The Prophet created order out of this martial chaos. He taught his warriors of Badr and later battles to fight in a disciplined and organised manner. First of all, early at dawn, before the battle began, he arrayed them in lines, generally three deep but so compact that no space was left between two soldiers. Besides other advantages, this compact line-formation infused courage and confidence, due to its closeness. He then instructed them to await the enemy advance calmly and composedly, with their weapons at the ready. Finally, when the enemy came within shooting range, they were to hurl at him first the arrows, and stones. Then they attacked him with their spears and, finally, when at close quarters, to fall upon the advancing enemy with their swords shouting "*Ya Mansur, amit*"—"O Victors, kill." The impact of this disciplined and organised action was always shattering upon the disorderly mass of the Qurayshites and other enemies of the Prophet. They were always routed, in spite of their superiority in numbers and weapons. In course of time, as the armies of the Holy Prophet expanded, the same discipline, order, confidence and courage were infused in them. These warriors of the Prophet became the core of the armies which Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman hurled against the mighty Empires of Persia and the Byzantium. Moreover, the mobility of the camel, short rations, and the tacties of hurried matches and quick retreats made the disciplined forces of early Islam invincible. The Persian and Byzantine armies, though well-equipped in the accoutrements of war, were disorderly and disunited masses of soldiers and slaves, often chained together.

Khalid's tactics: While the Prophet was the creator of the Arab infantry, whom he taught to fight in line-formation, Khalid bin Walid was the creator of the Arab cavalry. He was a superb tactician. Whenever the enemy showed the first signs of wavering and flight, he would deliver a shattering charge with his cavalry. He also introduced a new method of warfare in cohorts. The army was divided into cohorts or compact but small detachments. They were successively hurled against the enemy in a crescendo of furious charges till he was defeated and put to flight. He used the cohort tactics in such critical battles as those of Yemama in Central Arabia and Yermuk against the Byzantines. It may be added that no further advance was made in warfare by the Arabs or the Muslims ever afterwards. The methods of warfare in lines or in cohorts were never improved upon or new ones evolved by them during the whole

of the subsequent Islamic history. Rather they fell back upon the disorderly and unorganised mass-formation of the earlier times when the age of decay and decadance began. This mass-formation came to be known as the "lashkar" resulting in disorderly fighting or melee in subsequent times.

Umar's Organisation : While the armies of early Islam were conquering a vast empire, Umar set himself the task of organising its defences and logistics. He divided the whole Empire into nine military districts, constructed contonments at strategic places and towns, stationed troops there and in frontier forts and posts. He set up military pastures in them, where horses and camels of the State grazed. He organised military personnel, the Areefs as pay-masters and intelligence men. He also created the Mnqatila or the army of fighting Arabs, whose pensions, rations and other emoluments were provided from the Bayt al-Mal. In short, the military organisation undar the Orthodox Caliphs was almost exclusively the achievement of Hazrat Umar.

Military Districts : The Empire was divided into nine military districts, called *junds*. They were Medina, Kufa, Basra and Mosul in Iraq, Fustat and Misr in Egypt, Damascus, Hims in Syria and Palestine. They were different from the political divisions of the Empire.

Military Stations : Each of the military districts had one or more military stations or cantonments and garrisons, where the troops, the Muqatila, were permanently stationed for the security of the region and the defence of the Empire. These military stations were set up at Damascus, Hims. Tiberias in Syria, at Lydda, and later at Ramla in Palestine, at Kufa and Basra in Iraq, at old Babylon or Misr, Fustat and Alexanderia in Egypt, while large garrisons were stationed at Edessa in Syria, Isfahan in Persia, and Gaza in Palestine, and other frontier and coastal towns. Troops were permanently stationed in these cantonments and garrison town, in fixed corps of particular tribes, for whom special quarters in the new settlements were reserved. For instance, Basra was divided into five quarters, one each of the five tribes of Azd, Temim, Bakr, Abdul Qays and the Medinites. In case of emergency of the Caliph could draw upon a large supply of troops from these garrison towns. As we have seen in the case of Basra and Kufa, these new towns were at first temporary constructions of mudwalls, but later permanent houses of bricks and stones were constructed. These cantonments became flourishing towns and cities. They played a great role in the subsequent history of the provinces and the Empire.

In every Military station huge stable for the horses were con-

structed. A cavalry force of 4000 horsemen, with their horses equipped for prompt action, were always kept ready to march at once against any danger at a short notice. Grazing pastures were reserved for the horses. Every horse was branded on the thigh with the words: "Fighter in the way of Allah". Moreover, every military station had a record office, a pay-master's office where the Pension Register or *Diwan* was kept and a provision store.

Emoluments of the Muqatila: One of the most important military institutions of Hazrat Umar was His Diwan or the Register of Pensions. According to the teachings of Islam, every adult male was a soldier. Before Umar his pay and rations depended upon the fortunes of war. But the Caliph organised them on regular and fixed basis of the pensions of the Diwan, which were charged on the Public Treasury or the Bayt al-Mal in each province. Every soldier received a salary which varied between 300 to 600 dirhams per annum, besides free rations, dress, footwear, etc. which he also got from the State-maintained kitchens and depots. Moreover, the wives and children of every soldier also got their own stipends from the Diwan. These pensions and rations were over and above the share in the war-booty which every soldier received on the battle-field, at the rate of one share for every foot-soldier and three for a horseman.

Number of Soldiers. At first the armies of the Caliphs were small detachments of 3000 or, at the most, 5000 men. But with every new victory over their Persian or Byzatine enemies, the armies rapidly increased. At Qadisiya they numbered 30,000 men and at Yermuk 40,000. At the end of the Orthodox Caliphate, for instance, both Ali add Muawiya brought to the battle of Siffin, according to one account, huge armies of 90,000, and 70,000 men respectively. In the garrison cities of Kufa and Basra 40,000 and 70,000 troops respectively were stationed permanently. This rapid increase in the Muqatila was due to the mobilisation of the Arabian tribes in the Peninsula, the recruitment of the former subject Arab tribes in Iraq and Syria and, to a lesser extent, the enrolement of the new converts of non-Arab extraction, the Mawali, as they were called. The tribe was the basis of the Muqatila or Arab armies, as it was before the Caliphs.

Army-formations. The early armies of Islam consisted of two kinds of troops, the infantry and the cavalry. But soon other kinds of troops were added. They were the archers, scouts or intelligence corps and a service crops. The infantry were armed with shields, lances, swords, mostly double-edged, and lances or bows and arrows, and the cavalry with shields, swords and long lances. The infantry also included the arches. As described above, the foot-soldiers were arryed in lines usually three deep and

the cavalry in cohorts or compact columns of horsemen, who were posted at the two wings of the army or kept in reserve in the rear, from where they were hurled against the enemy when he gave the first indication of cracking up and flight.

Army Divisions. The Arabs soon learnt the usual arrangement of the army on the battle-field into five divisions which prevailed throughout the ancient times. They were the Centre and the two Flanks and one division in front and another in the rear. The cavalry was posted at the two wings of the right and left flanks of the front divisions, or held in reserve in the rear.

At first the Arab armies were deficient in siege weapons, but in course of time they soon acquired them. They were *e.g.*, the wooden "*dabbabah*", a sort of catapult to hurl stones at the walls of the forts or other fortifications, and the moving "breachers", a sort of an armoured cars in which the "Naqqabun" or hole-makers, advanced upto the walls of the forts and effected a breach in them with their picks and drills.

Military Officials : The Ameer or Commander. The "Ameers" or commanders were appointed by the Caliph, to whom they were responsible. But if two or more armies were combined, as in the battle of Yermuk, one of the commanders assumed supreme command, as designated by the Caliph. The Commander or the Supreme Commander, as the case may be, conducted the daily public prayers. Indeed, worship and warfare went together: the man who led the Muslims in public prayers was also their commander on the battlefield.

The Areef. At first the Caliph did not appoint any other officer, except the Ameer or Commander. Later an Officer, called Areef, was appointed to control and supervise the affairs of all the tribes, of which the Arab army consisted. He was sort of a liaison officer between the tribes and the Caliphal government. But still later, Hazrat Umar improved upon this method of appointing subordinate officers. He appointed an Areef for every group of ten soldiers. In fact, the Areef was like the Decurion in the Roman or Byzantine armies. His duties were to supervive his men, maintain discipline and report to the government the names of those who shirked their military duties. He was thus at once a liasion and an intelligence officer of the Caliph. The Areef was also the pay-master.

Maintenance of Discipline. With the great increase in the number of the soldiers, discipline slackened and military service was shirked. It became, therefore, necessary to punish the shirkers or deserters. Umar introduced the method of punishing the culprit

by removing his turban before a gathering of the troops, and putting him in the pillory. Still later the shaving of beard and head of the offender was also adopted as a punishment. Under the Umayyad Caliphs such punishments were found not deterrent enough and the culprits were simply beheaded by Hajjaj bin Yusuf.

On the March. When an Arab army was on the march, the commanders took all the precautions to protect his men and to know the movements and plans of the enemy. Scouts were sent in advance of the army to spy and report the movements or whereabouts of the enemy. Behind them advanced the army, with the vanguard in front, the main army behind it and the rearguard with the luggage, siege engines, wives, slaves and children of the soldiers and commanders and their herds and flocks last of all. The camel was the animal of transport. Movement was by easy marches. When the army camped for night, a fire-ditch and barricades were put around the camp and sentries posted around it. Camping grounds were carefully chosen. Provisions were supplied either by forage, or, as later, by a regular supply and service crops, called the Ahra. Physicians and surgeons accompanied the army to look after the wounded and the invalid.

Tactics. The method of fighting combined both oldgand new tactics, known to the Arabs before and during the ace of the Prophet. Before the actual fighting began, poets sang the stories of the valour and victories of their tribes, orators o Khatibs harangued them to feats of valour, while the Quran-readers recited verses of the Quran prophesying God's favour and victory to the Muslims. Then heroes stepped forth to challenge the enemy to single combats. Finally, general fighting began. The troops were marshalled in three or more lines, with the standard-bearer of the tribe in front. They were usually instructed to await the enemy attack and then resist it with their lances and finally to grapple the enemy at close quarters with their swords and daggers after shouting the battle-cry of Allah-o-Akbar, and thus "wrest from the enemy that God has willed". When the enemy showed first signs of retreat or flight, the cavalry charged to put him to rout. If the enemy's number was too large, as at Yermuk, Khalid bin Walid, adopted the tactics of throwing against him a successive wave of "cohorts" or detachments of one thousand men to keep him engaged with relays of fresh troops. Such hammer storke tactics, coupled with cavalry charges proved effective against the overwhelming superiority of the enemy.

In conclusion, we may say that the secret of the victories of the early Muslims lay in their mobility, their tactics of surprise attack, their powers of endurance and perseverence, their strategy

of the desert-power, discipline, superior generalship, religious enthusiasm for victory or martyrdom and their natural and spontaneous advantages of the desert-life over the decrepit, decadent and disorderly armed forces of their adversaries of the Sown.

Chapter 33

SOCIETY AND CULTURE UNDER THE ORTHODOX CALIPHS

The age of the Orthodox Caliphs was short, but momentous in the history of Islam. Although it failed to solve many political and constitutional issues, it yet laid the foundations of Islamic society and culture to a very great extent. It was an age of transition from the nomadic tribalism of ancient Arabia to the urban settled society and culture of the Medieval Islam. But in this respect also, it was an age of beginnings rather than of permanent achievements. It was still full of the pioneering spirit of its builders and conquerors to be moulded into a set pattern of life. We can notice its poineering spirit and energy in all walks of life and organization—religious, cultural, juristical, social, etc.

Religious Life : Religion was the end-all and be-all of the Orthodox Caliphate. It was here that greatest effort was made at the diffusion, universalisation and assimilation of Islamic teachings and practices. Mosques were founded in all the towns and cities in the conquered provinces where Muslim garrisons were stationed. According to Shibli, their number must be several thousands. Teachers of the Quran were appointed. Hazrat Umar ordered that the teachers and the Quran-readers should be paid special stipends from the Bayt al-Mal. People were encouraged to learn as much of the Quran as possible by heart. He instructed that the pronunciation and recitation should be the standard one. For these purposes he sent several Companions to the various provincial headquarters to teach the Quranic text to the Muslims. They were Mu'adh bin Jabal, Ubadah bin al-Smt and Abu Durda. They went to Hims, Damascus and Palestine. At the same time Mu'azzin and Imams were appointed in the Mosques of the city-quarters, who were paid salaries for their jobs. The mosque were also schools where children were taught the Quran and other religious texts. Thus an attempt was made to have the Islamic teachings assimilated by the older and younger generations of the Muslims, many of whom now did not dwell within Arabia.

Beginnings of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence : A powerful factor in the growth of Islamic society and culture was the Islamic Law and Jurisprudence, called *Fiqh*. According to von Kremer, "The Arabs were the only people of the early Middle Ages, who in the development and scientific treatment of legal principles,

achieved results which approached in their magnificent splendour those of the Romans—the law-givers of the world".[1] The Orthodox Caliphate witnessed the beginnings of the evolution of Islamic Law. There were several factors which urged its growth.

Origins of Sunnah and Fiqh : Islam preached both dogma or spiritual belief and a social code of life. There were thousands of things and questions of daily life which need to be regulated by Islamic precepts, such as marriage, divorce, property, inheritance, religious duties and responsibilities, social relations, etc. Many of them were still regulated by pre-Islamic customs of the Arabian tribes. But they were either condemned or modified by the Quranic revelations, or by what the Prophet said or did. During the Prophet's lifetime, if any doubt was felt by anyone of his Companions, he could go and seek Prophet's instructions about it. After his death it was no longer possible. Yet a need was felt for discovering Islamic Law when the Quranic injunctions were non-existent or not clear. This need led to the collection of what the prophet said or did relevant to the matter in question, called the *sunnah* or the precedents of the Prophet. It became, after the Quran, the second source of Islamic Law. A search was made, when need for person or persons who had seen or heard the Prophet doing or saying something regarding the thing in question. When such a "*hadith*" or saying or example of the Prophet was discovered, the matter was decided according to it.

Such pronouncements of Prophet's hadith or Sunnah were made by his Companions, including the four Pious Caliphs. Though in this respect all Muslims were equal, but the decisions or pronouncements of the four Caliphs were considered more authentic than those of other Muslims, for they had for more closer association with the Prophet. In this way, the decisions or pronouncements of the four Caliphs also became their Sunnah for later Muslims. The same was to a lesser extent true of all other Companions of the Prophet and, in course of time, of their children, called the "*Tabi'een*". Some great names among these Companions and Tabi'een are Abdullah bin Masud, Mu'adh bin Jabal, Abu Ubaydah al-Jarrah, Abu Durda, Abu Musa of al-Ashari. Ibn Abbas and many others. Each one of them became the orignal link in the chain of "authorities" or "*rawis*" of the Hadiths of the Prophet, called the "*isnad*". Thus step by step and item by item, the great science of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence or Fiqh, grew from these orignal sources.

It must be remembered that these original pronouncements were

1. Vein Kremer, The Orient under the Caliphs, p. 367.

oral, for the practice of reducing them to writing was still frowned upon by the Muslims, lest the Hadiths might displace the Quran as the only authentic basis of Islam. These hadiths passed on orally from generation to generation. It was nearly a century after that attempts were first made to collect and record them in writing. The four Caliphs encouraged the investigation and pronouncement of the Sunnah of the Prophet. Many schools of Fiqh arose in Medina, which really became a "*dar-as-Sunnah*"—the house and centre of Sunnah. Besides the Caliphs, such other renowned teachers as Abdullah bin Abbas, and others discoursed upon the new science of Islamic Law.

Their Compatibility with Arabian Mind: It may be remarked here that this grownth of law and jurisprudence suited the Arab mind perfectly. The Arabs, as a people, are devoted to follow the ways of their ancestors. In spite of their restless and unruly life, they are, however, the most conservative people. They love to follow the well-trodden paths of their forerunners. Before the rise of Islam, they followed the customs of their tribal chiefs and heroes, which were also significantly called the Sunnah. These tribal "sunnahs" were now replaced by the Sunnah of the Prophet. That is the reason why the urgent need for discovering it was so keenly felt after the demise of the Prophet.

In Islam, Allah is the lawgiver. Quranic verse is, therefore, a piece of legislation. This process of legislation ended after the death of the Holy Prophet. But the need was felt for new injunctions when new questions or cases arose, which were not wholly or clearly covered by the Quranic revelations. This need was satisfied by the discovery of the Prophet's Sunnah, or by the collective opinion or Ijma of his Companions, or even by the individual opinion or Qayas of one of them. Thus Umar and other Companions gave new rulings on the Islamic Law. However, their pronouncements, whether collective or individual, were not legislative in nature but only interpretative, *i.e.*, they were made within the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah. They did not prescribe a new law, but merely laid down a ruling within the original law of Islam—the Quran and the Sunnah. In this way the conservative spirit of the Arabs was reflected in the new world of Islam. The growth of Fiqh, *i.e.*, the collecting, arranging and correlating of the Hadiths or Sunnah of the Prophet was a great step towards the universalisation and assimilatlon of Islamic beliefs, institutions and practices among the far-flung Muslim population of the Empire.

Education: Education under the Orthodax Caliphs was exclusively religious. Mosques were the schools for the children and also places of discourse and study of Islamic theology and 'Fiqh'.

There were also "higher schools" of Islamic learning in Medina, and to a lesser, extent, in Kufa, where Hazrat Ali, Abdullah bin Abbas and Abdullah bin Masud and others discoursed upon the Islamic theology, Tafsir, etc.

Cultural Life

We now turn towards the social and cultural life under the Orthodox Caliphs, where the diversity of Islamic and non-Islamc ways was very great, and the influence of Islamic teachings was yet incipient.

Tribal Life : Tribal life in Arabia was moulded on Islamic teachings. Matriarchal institutions were wiped out and replaced by patriarchal institutions in respect of marriage, divorce, family life, inheritance, etc. The authority of the tribal chief, though still great, was subordinated to that of the Caliph's central government. The old tribal law of retaliation, *lex talionis*, was replaced by the Islamic law of retaliation. The tribes were integrated into the social and political system of the Islamic State and law. The Caliphs appointed teachers, mua' zzins, and tax-collectors in various tribes of the desert to perform these functions.

Town Life : No such uniformity and assimilation of Islamic teachings and institutions were yet attained in the towns, both old and new, as among the tribes. The reason was simple. Town life was more dynamic, varied and exposed to several powerful forces and influences, inhabitad as they were by Muslims and non-Muslims. They had a great diversity in language, customs, culture, religion and historical past. In fact, every town or city was unique in itself. We survey a few of them to illustrate the spirit which agitated each of them. They are Medina, Mecca, Kufa and Basra. They are arranged in a manner that shows the extremes of pietism and Islamic spirit to secularism and more alien spirit.

Medina: Being Medinat un-Nabi,—the "City of the Prophet", the seat of the Caliphs' Government and the home of his Companions, Medina was *par excellence* an Islamic city, moulded in the pristine spirit the new Faith. Memories of the Prophet's ministry were still vivid. They influenced the life and thought of his Companions, associates and others who dwelt in it. Being the capital of the vast Empire, its influence radiated into all its provinces and regions. Several schools and places of Islamic learning were gradually coming into being where Islamic theology and jurisprudence, tafsir and discourses on sacred text were taught and preached. The Mosque of the Prophet was the centre of all political, social and religious activities.

However, the demographical complexion of Medina changed rapidly during the period of conquests, especially under Umar and Uthman. This change was brought about by the efflux of old and influx of new population. Originally the home of a small population of the Ansars and Muhajireen, Medina lost some of its original inhabitants and acquired many others. Hundreds of the Muhajir and Ansar families emrigated to the newly-conquered provinces, where they settled more or less permanently. At the same time, thousands of the captives of war were brought to Medina. Moreover, a growing number of outsiders, either from Arabia or from the Provinces, came to dwell in Medina for various purposes. Thus the small and compact community of the Prophet's Medina now swelled into a conglomerate population of the large metropolis of the Islamic Empire. Besides the Muhajir and Ansar Companions and their children, it included slaves, freedmen, Bedouin settlers and foreign immigrants, who were attracted to the capital for religious and economic reasons. One reason why the Orthodox Caliphate came to an end within thirty years of its birth was this demographic transformation of its capital, especially the departure of many leading persons and families of the Companions and their descendants to the provinces. Thus Medina lost its former paramount position in the politics and economics of early Islam to the new provincial centres, like Kufa, Basra or Damascus.

Mecca : Mecca was the second holy city of Islam. But it had not yet grown out of its pagan past. It was still inhabited by the people and leaders who had vigorously resisted Islam and the Prophet for two decades. Though they had now become Muslims, they were yet addicted to many habits, customs and practices of their pre-Islamic past. That is why Mecca presented a great contrast to Medina in many ways. Still inhabited by many rich Qurayshite merchants and financiers, who had now supplemented new sources of enrichment to their former merchantile income. They held high government posts, such as governorships in the provinces, where they combined business with government. Thus victories of Islam became a new source of wealth to them. With the accession of Hazrat Uthman, the Quraysh in general and the Umayyads in particular became the aristocratic party which endeavoured to rule the Empire. It even gained the upper hand in the pietist Medina.

The growing riches of the Meccans inclined them all the more towards a life of luxury and pleasure, song and music. If Medina became a centre of Islamic theology, Mecca became that of pre-Islamic poetry. The rich Meccans brought female slave-singers to their social gatherings, while their poets and fashionable youth freely sang of love and worship of women, which was a prominent characteristic of pre-Islamic Arabian poetry. They also opened regular

gathering places or gaming clubs, where the members enjoyed various kinds of games, like chess or even book-reading. In short, as Von Kremer writes, "the rich Makkans passed away their time with love, wine, and song". There was, also an anti-social trend in their love of song and poetry. It was the rise of a class of effiminate male singers, called *Mukhannaths,* who imitated the dress and postures of the females. Though the Caliphs issued stringent orders to suppress them, they survived and formed a 'guild' of their own. Indeed, Mecca, and later Medina, had centres where male and female slaves and the Mukhanaths were trained in their profession of song and poetry, in order to fetch high prices.

Kufa and Basra: their Demography and Society: The Twin Cities of Iraq were founded in 638 A.D. Their good climate, fertile lands, and modern amenities attracted large numbers of the Arab tribes to settle in them. They played a great role in the consolidation and growth of the Islamic empire in the lands and countries to their east and north. At first they were only military garrison or barrack-cities, where the early Islamic warriors dwelt with their tribes, clans, dependents and captives of war. But at the end of the Orthodox Caliphate and during the Umayyad Caliphate, their demographic complexion changed. The captives of war were mostly Persians, and, therefore, the Persian tongue became the second language of these Arab cities. Indeed, Persian became the tongue of the market-places, for the Persian slaves, who now mostly adopted Islam, took to trade and commerce. The Two Cities, therefore, became centres of trade and commerce, riches and culture. In course of time, they also came to be inhabited by poets, scholars divines and saints and thus became the centres of Islamic learning at the end of the Umayyad period and during the Abbaside rule.

There were some subtle differences between the Two Cities. Though both were settled mostly by the Bedouin tribes, yet the northern Arab tribes predominated in Basra, while the southern Arab tribes in Kufa. Climatically also Kufa was healthier than Basra. It soon outshown its rival of the south in riches and influence on the destinies of Iraq and Islamic Empire. Moreover, both of them were full of quarrelsome, restless and factious tribes. But, at first, the quarrels in Kufa were mostly religio-political and in Basra mostly socio-political. On the whole, both cities became restless and rebellious under the Umayyads. But the Kufans were notoriously fickle and mercenary in their loyalties and allegiance, as the Alides were to learn to their misfortune on several occasions.

The causes of the restless and rebellious inclinations of the inhabitants of the Two Cities were at once social, economic, political and religious. Both of them were inhabited by the Arabs, who numbered between 150,000 to 200,000 men, women and children,

at the end of the Orthodox Caliphate, that is, barely a generation after their foundation. Among the Arabs, the unruly Bedouin elements predominated. The Bedouins were jealous of the comparatively richer and more cultured Arabs of the town, especially of the Quraysh, who began to flock into these Cities after the death of Hazrat Umar, who had placed a ban an Qurayshite migration to the newly conquered provinces. In fact, every new tribe which arrived in them incited socio-economic disputes among the old and new settlers, for it required re-allocation of the lands and pensions among them. The arrival of the Qurayshites under Uthman provoked a revolt of the Arab tribes of Kufa and Basra against him, which ended in his martyrdom. The arrival of the Azd of Oman at the end of the Orthodox Caliphate kindled the inter-tribal rivalry and feuds of the Arabian tribes under the Umayyad Caliphs. Now every socio-economic dispute took the shape of religio-political quarrel. It involved the government of the day, the Umayyades with their political adversaries. Thus arose such religio-political parties in Iraq as the Shias and the Kharijis. What was originally a socio-economic clash of interests, became a political quarrel under the garb of religious differences and disputes.

Damascus : The ancient city of Damascus played a role in the early history of Islam no lesser than that of Medina or Mecca. Kufa or Basra. Though, under the Orthodox Caliphs, it was yet a provincial city, its influence began to be felt at the end of this period. In a way it combined the features of Medina and Mecca and had also much of its own. Though the capital of Muslim Syria, it still remained a predominantly Christian city, where the cultural, social and administrative traditions and customs of the Byzantine rule still survived. After its conquest, hundreds of the citizens of Medina and Mecca and thousands of Arabs made it their abode. Muawiya, who succeeded his brother. Yezid bin Abu Sufyan, remained its governor for twenty years, (640-60 A.D.) till he himself became Caliph and made it the capital of his Empire. There were many Muslims who were puritanic, austere and strict, like the citizens of Medina, from where they had immigrated. But Muawiya and his officials and supporters adopted the luxurious ways of the Byzantine rulers of old. They wore gorgeous costumes, lived in palatial buildings and were surrounded by bodyguards and the like. To this extent the ways of Mecca were imported into this metropolis of Syria

Literature and Learning: The Arabs of the Orthodox Caliphate were nomadic warriors and conquerors, who knew little or nothing of arts and literature, except poetry. Their learning consisted almost exclusively of their tribal falklore, geneologies and folk-tales. They had not yet developed their sciences and learning for which the Arabs became famous in subsequent

centuries. Even the art of writing Arabic was still the Hiraite or Kufic style of writing without vowel-signs and diacritical marks. Hazrat Umar had instructed his provincial officials to pay particular attention to the proper recitation of the Quran by careful pronuncitation of its text. Later, Hazrat Uthman issued authenticated copies of the Quran so as to prevent incorrect reading of the holy text.

Nevertheless, the Arabs were endowed with certain superb intellectual qualities. Being the sons of the desert, living in an intimate contact with Nature, they possessed the qualities of curiosity, wonderment and an eagerness to enquire and understand things strange and new. They soon became, therefore, enthusiastic students of non-Arab arts and sciences, philosophy and learning, religion, history and culture of the subject peoples and foreign lands.

Poetry : Pre-Islamic Arabs were proud of their poetry. But the religious atmosphere and puritanic attitude of the Caliphs and the pietists in Medina did not favour a free growth of Arab poetry. For example, Hazrat Umar made setire a punishable crime. Shibli remarks that the Caliph put Hitah, a renowned satirist poet, into jail for it. Even lyrical poetry was much handicapped by puritanical regulations. The Caliph forbade the mentioning of the name of the poets' love-lady in his verses, which was a very common practice among the Arab poets.

Architecture : Arabia, at the rise of Islam, did not possess anything worthy of the name of architecture. The great architectural edfices of the ancient Yemen were buried under the sands or were in ruins. Most of the Arabian population was nomadic wanderers of the desert. The few who dwelt in towns and cities lived in unpretentious houses of stones or sun-dried bricks and even in hovels of mud. Even Kā'ba was a simple edifice. But the vast conquests and the growing riches of the Arabs brought about a change in their style of life both in the Peninsula and in the provinces. This change occurred in two different architectural environments ; the Syrian architecture where the Byzantine Christian architecture existed with its stone masonry, and the Sassanid architecture of ancient Iran with its brick masonry. The Arabs adopted both kinds of architecture in the respective provinces of Syria and Iraq. While in Syria the Muslims at first did not build mosques, palaces or mansions, but utilised the existing Christian buildings for their purposes, in Iraq and Persia extensive construction work was undertaken. In the new cities of Basra and Kufa, new houses, mosques, market-places of sun-dried bricks were constructed. They were still simple edifices. The *Dar al-Imara* (Governor's House) and the Central Mosque in

Kufa and Basra were constructed in 638 and 635 A. D. respectively. In Kufa, it was a wide square area nearly 100 yards in length and breadth, enclosed by a ditch on three sides and by a marble colonade on the fourth. It was taken from a Likhmid building in neighbouring Hira. This was the Mosque. On its *qibla* side, separated by a narrow street was the Dar al-Imara, the Governor's residence, by the side of which was the Bayt al-Mal and a market-place. They were simple constructions of bricks. Such was the simple and unpretentious beginning of the magnificent architecture of medieval Islam. Ranged in straight lines were the brick houses and quarters of the Arab tribes, each of which had a mosque, a market-place and a bazar of its own within its quarters. As the resources and wealth of the Arabs increased, their mosques, palaces, houses, mansions and market-places also began to be constructed of stone and marble. The same was the case in Medina and Mecca. The stone and brick houses of the richer sections in the holy cities were replaced by mansions of stone and marble during the more spacious days of Hazrat Uthman. "Masudi states", writes Ameer Ali, "that during the Caliphate of Osman the Companions of the Prophet built for themselves magnificent mansions".

Social Life and Deveploments

Social Order of the Orthodox Caliphate : Society under the Orthodox Caliphs consisted of Arabs and non-Arabs, Muslims and non-Mnslims. It was pervaded with tribalism, feudalism, and slavery, and was divided into several classes and sections. Owing to their conquests, the Arabs had become the ruling people. But among them, along with the old tribal divisions, new divisions of classes had also appeared. They were divided, especially at the end of the Orthodox Caliphate, into a class of aristocrats, *ashrāfs*, who possessed vast amount of wealth in gold, precious stones, landed estates, slaves, mansions and palaces, and the middle class of the Arabian tribes both settled and nomadic, who benefited from the pensions and provisions of the Bayt al-Mal. While the aristocratic classes adopted more and more the luxurious style of life of the former nobles and grandees of Rome and Persia, the middle class of the Arabian tribes still preserved their Arabian way of life. If this bifurcation were to be expressed in geographical terms, we may say that Mecca in Hijaz and Damascus in Syria symbolised the new aristocratic way of life, while Medina in Hijaz and Kufa and Basra in Iraq symbolised the old austere way of life.

Besides the Arabs, a new class of Muslims, the new converts or Mawali, was also emerging. They were those who had adopted Islam either voluntarily or through manumission. They became the Mawali or the 'clients' of the Arab tribe whose captives or

slaves they were before. Though Hazrat Umar granted pensions from the Diwan to many a Mawali, an overwhelming majority of them were denied these benefits, for after Umar's death, the doors of the Diwan were practically closed to them. Thus the Mawali constituted an underprivileged class of the Muslims. They were artisans, workers, shopkeepers and craftsmen, who dwelt in the outskirts of the new cantonment cities or garrison-towns of the conquered provinces or in Medina, and to a lesser extent in Mecca.

Outside Arabian Peninsula, the Islamic Empire was still overwhelmingly non-Muslim in population. Forcible conversions, Christian and European accusation notwithstanding, were neither permissible nor practised by the early Muslims. Thanks to the institutions of Umar, these non-Muslim non-Arab subject peoples were left in the possession of their ancestral lands, houses and properties and granted complete freedom of worship and religion. So there were hordes of non-Muslim merchants, landlords, traders, shopkeepers, craftsmen artisans, workers, cultivators, etc. Many of them lived in settled communities in villages and towns, though there were a few of them still nomadic tribesmen, especially in Syria, Iraq and Persia. They were divided into various religions and sects, such as Christians, Jews, Magians or Zoroastrians, Nabateans, etc. Racially also they were divided into Arabs, Copts, Syrians, Greeks, Persians, etc. Thus they presented a picture of great diversity and variety which created several difficulties of assimilation into Islamic society and culture, religion and politics, when they adopted Islam in subsequent times. It was, indeed, a long and arduous process to create a uniform pattern of social life and culture, religious belief and practice out of such a motley of races and tribes, classes and sections, religions and cultures, beliefs and customs as formed the population of Western Asia under the Orthodox Caliphs. It required a definite policy of assimilation and uniformization on the part of the Caliphs and their administrators, the divines and teachers, to create a new social order of Islam. It may be remarked here that of all the leaders and rulers of the Caliphate, Hazrat Umar alone understood the nature of this problem to a fairly great degree. As we have already said he took steps to universalise Islamic institutions and practices and have Islamic way of life assimilated by the heterogenesus elements of the Islamic Empire. Unfortunately no other Caliph or his subordinates understood his policy of univeralization and assimilation of Islamic society and culture in the manner as he did If there had been some uniformity and assimlation in the later Islamic culture and society, it was due more to the spontaneous elements and actlvities of the people rather than that of State policy or conscious direction.

Slavery. Slavery existed in Islam under the Holy Prophet.

But, as Ameer Ali writes, "from all that we have said it is abundantly clear that the Legislator (the Prophet) himself looked upon lhe custom as temporary in its nature, and held that its extinction was sure to be achieved by the progress of ideas and change of circumstances." (Cf. The Spirit of Islam, p. 264). The Orthodox Caliphs, especially Hazrat Umar, endeavoured to attain this noble ideal set by the Prophet. Umar forbade the enslavement of the people of the Arab blood altogether, and those who were held in bondage were set free by his orders. Many persons captured and sold into slavery during the Wars of Apostasy were then emancipated. He further instructed that the families of the slaves should not be split up by sale. If need be, the father and sons, mother and daughter brothers and sisters should be sold together. He further instructed that a female slave to whom a child was born could no longer be sold by her master. He encouraged emancipation of the slaves by legislising the purchase of his freedom under an agreement with his master. Thus Umar, following the precedent and instructions of the Prophet, tried to restrict the usage of slavery. If his example and policy had been continued by his successors, slavery would have been abolished in Medieval Islam altogether. But this useful and humane social evolution towards complete abolition of slavery was arrested after him and slavery continued to flourish in all subsequent ages of Islamic history, and even became an integral feature of Islamic society, state and culture.

The same tendency was shown in Umar's refusal to make over the subject peoples of the conquered provinces to the Arab warriors as slaves. As we have said above, to the Caliph to sanction the distribution of the conquered peoples among their soldiers and officers. But Umar rejected their request and instructed them to leave the Persians and other subject peoples in possession of their lands and houses on the condition of paying Jizya and Kharaj. This shows that Hazrat Umar was in favour of the feudalisation of the subject peoples rather than their enslavement.

Women : their life and role. "Among the Arabs," writes Ameer Ali, "women were and still are perfectly free." Such is, indeed, the case with all tribal peoples, among whom women cannot be held in the same kind of subjection as in more settled communities. The women of the nomadic tribes are, by the very exigencies of the nomadic life, cannot be subjected to the restrictions and prohibitions as the women in settled village or urban communities are. So the Arab women of the Orthodox Caliphate enjoyed a great measure of freedom. They also possessed certain rights and privileges which Islam had conferred upon them.

The Pious Caliphs. especially Hazrat Umar, interpreted Islamic injunctions of the Quran and the Sunnah in order to

embody them in the social life of the people. Matters relating to marriage, divorce, family relations and responsibilities, and the life were frequently brought before them and adjudicated upon by them in the light of the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. Their decisions became the basis of further evolution of Islamic law of marriage, divorce, family life, etc. Hazrat Umar, who was otherwise hard towards women, showed his innate sense of justice and fair play even in such questions. He was the first Caliph who enjoined that three divorces, pronounced by the husband at one and the same time meant final divorce. Later, his ruling was interpreted by medieval jurists or Faqihis, as strengthening the hands of the husband. But this was not the purpose of the Caliph. He intended to discourage the increasing tendency among the men of his days to harass their wives by pronouncing the "three divorces" at long intervals and thus avoid their obligations. They had become prompt in pronouncing "first divorce" and then 'raju' and then "second divorce" and "raju', thereby causing uncertainty and insult to women. The fact was that due to the patriarchal dominance of the male as sanctioned by Islam, the men were inclined to take unfair advantage of their superior position and indulged in frequent pronouncements of "talaq" and "raju" as this practice of "three divorces" operated them. In view of it Hazrat Umar ordained that "three divorces on a single sitting" amounted to a final divorce, and not to "one divorce", as before.

In family life, however, patriarchal dominance of the male became universal. Even Hazrat Umar discouraged the women's right of divorce, called khula', which was the last vestige of their former freedom and privilege. In fact the whole Arab society was now rapidly evolving into an unmitigated patriarchalism. The male dominance was becoming absolute; women's freedom was more and more curtailed, as countless female captives of war were brought into the homes and hearths of the victorious Arabs from the conquered lands. Nevertheless, traditions and respect of free women still prevailed among the noble families of Medina and elsewhere. "Purdah" in the strict sense of the term, was still unknown to the Arabs. Women still attended public functions in the mosques, the sermons of the Caliphs and were even summoned to the Shura of the Caliph, if a question of female concern was before it. They followed their men to the battlefields, where they even joined fighting, if need arose, as the Arab women did in the battle of Yermuk. The Arab tribes migrated to conquered lands with their women and children. Yet the hard lot of womenfolk was best illustrated by the poems of the women-poets. There were several of them in the days of the Orthodox Caliphate. But they composed only the mournful dirges, called *Marthias*, lamenting the death or murder of their dear ones.

The Dhimmis. Overwhelming majority of the population was still non-Muslims in religion, such as Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Sabaeans, etc. divided into various sects. They were called the *Ahl al Dhimmia* or the people of protection, briefly the Dhimmis, for they had submitted to the Muslim conquerors and were under the protection of Islam, as guaranteed by the treaties with them. Such treaties were concluded between the Caliph or his commanders with the city or people whom they had subdued. The very first treaty was concluded between Khalid and the Christians of Hira, in the Caliphate of Abu Bakr Later Umar granted a number of treaties to several Syrian cities and towns, such as Jerusalem, Jabiya, etc. These treaties granted and imposed duties upon the non-Muslim subjects, established their relationship with the Islamic State and rulers, determined their conduct and behaviour *vis-a-vis* the Muslims and established their place and role in the Muslim society and polity. They were later interpreted and commented upon by Muslim jurists and judges of the Middle Ages and became the basis of Muslim law of war and peace, constitution and minority rights. Western writers have given them the name of the Constitution of Umar. We have described them in previous chapters.

The question of the Dhimmis was, indeed, of foundamental significance. It could be dealt with in two ways. One of them was that of Christian Europe, where non-Christians were constrained to adopt Christianity by war, missionary work or inquisitorial persecutions. This was method of intolerance and oppression in matters of religion. In spite of this oppression, it had one great merit. It created uniformity of social life and culture, political unity and the assimilation of diverse elements into a single body politique. Therein lies the secret of the strength and success of European Christendom in the Middle Ages and of the European Civilisation and culture in the modern times. If the early Caliphs and divines had also adopted the same policy of resolute proselytism and diffusion of Islam, the whole history of Islam would have been absolutely different. They would have avoided three centuries of internecine disputes, dissensions and schisms in religious, and social matters, prompted as they were by non-Islamic influences, while they would have established a uniform and united social and political system. The other method was that of tolerating the differences of religion and belief on conditions of loyalty to Islamic State and payment of discriminatory taxes and tributes. This method has been euphemistically called one of tolerance and freedom of religion and worship. It is justified by references to the example of the Prophet and by its compatibility to the modern spirit of toleration and freedom in religion and worship. This was the method which the Pious Caliphs adopted as their policy towards their non-Muslim subjects.

Nevertheless, it had its dangers in the long run. It proved to be the greatest obstacle to the assimilation and uniformisation of the social life and culture in the Muslim East, as Europe achieved twice under militant and intolerant Christianity, firstly, under the later Roman Emperors and then after the Germanic conquests. The second forcible Christianisation of Europe was almost contemporaneous with the rise and expansion of Islam in Western Asia. We shall notice the historical consequences of these two ways of the evolution of Christianity and Islam on the subsequent ages of Islamic history in later pages.

Causes of the End of the Orthodox Caliph

In the end, we may briefly summarise the causes and factors which brought to an end the Orthodox Caliphate within thirty years of its inception. They were; (1) the growing riches and wealth of the Arabs, which they had accumulated through conquests and taxation during the Orthodox Caliphate. Their wealth and prosperity created new classes and new attitudes towards the State, which militated against the simple, patriarchal rule of the frugal Caliphs (*ii*). The patriarchal simplicity and paternalism of the Orthodox Caliphs could not provide political stability and peace in the vast Empire they had built. It required less personal and more coercive authority, if its unity and peace were to be preserved. This was what the Umayyad Caliphs did. (*iii*) Arabism or the Arabian spirit of pride of race was yet another factor which led to the rise of new type of Caliphate, the Umayyad Caliphate. It was the kingdom of the Arab tribes, not a religio-political commonwealth, as the Orthodox Caliphate was. Arab tribes, especially of Syria, supported it as against its rivals, the tribes of Iraq and the pietists of Medina. (*iv*) The passing away of the Companions of the Prophet also contributed to the speedy end of the Orthodox Caliphate. For all purposes and intents the Orthodox Caliphate was the government of the Companions, by the Companions, but it was for Islam, in the light of the Quran and the Sunnah. When they passed away one by one, the Orthodox Caliphate also ceased to exist. (*v*) The rise of feudal aristocracy in Syria was a more stable politico-economic entity, but the incompetence of feudalistic tribalism of the unruly Iraqi tribes to create a stable society and polity was another factor in the replacement of Orthodox Caliphate by the Umayyad Caliphate of Damascus. Lesser factors which also contributed to the same end were the greater pull of the conquered provinces in political matters, because of their greater riches and prosperity, the shifting of the capital from Medina to Kufa, lack of well-defined constitutional laws and practices, political shrewdness of Muawiya, Amr bin al-As and others, the fatalistic pietism of the Tabi-een or the children

of the Companions, who retired from active politics into a life of religious seclusion, more intrested in saving their souls rather than their State, and finally, the Arab tribalism in which kinship groups decided political allegiance rather than membership of a larger social group.

An Incomplete Transition : Two Issues unsolved : The age of the Orthodox Caliphs was an age of transition. It laid the foundations of a uniform Islamic social life and culture to some extent. But the transition was not complete. Vast sectors of social and culture life still remained to be assimilated into a new, uniform and homogeneous Islamic Society and State. The Orthodox Caliphs left several issues unsolved, without which no social uniformity and assimilation, and political unity and harmony were possible. Among them two were of utmost significance. They were, firstly, Arabism *versus* Islamism and, secondly, tribalism *versus* feudalism. We shall see later how these two great issues were solved and how the old pagan spirit of Arabian tribalism and the new spirit of Islamism waged a struggle with each other during the Umayyad Caliphate, and how far the Umayyads succeeded in developing the socio-economic system of Medieval Islam.

PART III

THE UMAYYAD CALIPHATE

DEVELOPMENT OF FEUDALISM AND MEDIEVAL ISLAM

661—750 A.D./41—132 A.H.

CHAPTER 34

INTRODUCTORY

Distinctive Features of the Umayyad Caliphate

After the death of Hazrat Ali and the abdication of his son, Imam Hasan, a new Caliphate, the Umayyad, came into power in the Islamic Empire. At first there seemed to be no difference between it and the earlier one of the Orthodox Caliphs. But as time passed, it became more and more different from the latter. The differentiation began with Muawiya, the first Caliph of the Umayyads. It became more and more pronounced as other Umayyads succeeded him. We may, by way of introduction, briefly adumberate these differences, as under :—

Firstly, the difference was constitutional. The Orthodox Caliphate was an elective, republican State. The Umayyad Caliphate, on the contrary, became a hereditary monarchy.

Secondly, the Orthodox Caliphate was a religio-political commonwealth. But the Umayyad Caliphate was a secular State. such as could exist in the ancient times. Many of the Umayyad Caliphs were not particularly loyal to the political implications of the Faith, though they were faithful believers in their personal and private lives.

Thirdly, though Arabian in origin and personnel, Orthodox Caliphate was not Arabistic in policy and purpose. The Umayyad Caliphate, on the contrary, was as Wellhausen says an Arab Kingdom, that is, a government of the Arabs, by the Arabs and for the Arabs. The Arabs formed its ruling class and monopolised its political power and economic privileges. The non-Arabs, even though they be Muslims, were excluded from a share in its government and its political, economic and social benefits. In other words, while the Arabs were its first-class citizens, the non-Arab Muslims were its second-class citizens, while the Dihimmis or the non-Muslims were mere subjects.

Fourthly, during the Othodox Caliphate, the rivalry and antagonism among the Arab tribes was practically extinct, while the later Umayyad period was dominated by the growing rivalry and antagonism of the Arab tribes of the type of the pre-Islamic Jahiliya period, which ultimately became an important cause of the downfall of the Umayyad dynasty.

Lastly, the Umayyad Caliphate brought about many new developments in Islamic polity, society, economic life and culture. In this respect, it was a period of laying the foundation of Islamic civilisation and culture of the Middle Ages. It was on such foundations that leaders and the people of the Abbaside Caliphate later built the great edifice of Medieval Islam. This was the historical significance of the Umayyad period in the history of Islam and the world.

In short, Umayyad Caliphate was the beginning of the Medieval Islam and of the Islamic form of feudalism.

CHAPTER 35

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UMAYYAD DYNASTY

Ameer Muawiya : 661-680 A.D.

Hasan's accession and abdication. After Hazrat Ali's death his eldest son, Hasan, was elected at Kufa as the fifth Caliph in January, 661. Imam Hasan was an ease-loving person, more interested in private than in public life. This was Muawiya's opportunity. Already recognised as Caliph by the western half of the Muslim Empire, he now marched against Kufa to secure its Eastern half.

Hasan marched with forty thousand troops against Muawiya. He sent his ablest commander, named Qays, in advance and himself followed later. He halted at Madain for several weeks. His own inactivity and a rumour of the defeat of Qays made his troops to revolt against him. Upon this he decided to make peace with Muawiya on three conditions, (*i*) retaining to himself 5 million dirhams in the Bayt-ul-Mal of Kufa, (*ii*) enjoying the revenue of the Ahwaz Province, and (*iii*) Muawiya stopping to revile Ali's name in the mosques of the Empires. According to another version, the fourth condition was that after Muawiya's death Hasan's younger brother, Husayn, would be elected Caliph. Hasan retired from politics, abdicating in favour of Muawiya. Thus in July, 661, Muawiya became the undisputed Caliph of the whole Empire.

Hasan ruled the empire for nearly six months. He lived for another eight years in retirement at Medina. He was poisoned to death by one of his wives on the instigation of Yezid, as Shia traditions assert.

Muawiya as Caliph. Muawiya was the second son of Abu Sufyan. He accepted Islam after the Battle of the Ditch and became one of the trusted scribes of the the Prophet. Abu Bakr sent him to Syria along with his elder brother, Yezid, who became the Governor of Damascus. On his death in 639, Muawiya became the Governor and remained so for twenty years. After defeating Hasan, he was acclaimed as Caliph at Kufa. But he made Damascus his capital.

Problems confronting Muawiya. Muawiya faced several difficulties at the outset of his reign, which arose from the civil war and

disorders of Ali's Caliphate. The religious and moral injunctions which Islam had enjoined upon the unruly Bedouin tribes were loosened by the civil disorders. The Bedouin tribes, especially in Kufa and Basra, had reverted to anarchy and disloyalty to established and firm government. Moreover, the internecine quarrels of the Arabs also arrested the progress of their arms on the frontiers of the Empire. Muawiya solved these problems by (*i*) appointing strong administrators in the troubled provinces of his Empire to whom he delegated supreme authority to suppress all sorts of trouble-makers, (*ii*) reviving the forward policy of conquest and expansion of the Empire, and (*iii*) nominating his son as his successor in order to forestall possible quarrels and bloodshed consequent upon the election of a caliph.

Muawiya's administrative system. The first break with the traditions of the Orthodox Caliphate came in Muawiya's system of administration. He appointed his governors and administrators not because of their piety or service to Islamic community, but for their loyalty to himself and their ability for a strong and severe rule. He entrusted them with full authority to restore peace and order within their provinces by all means, fair or foul, for which they need feel no fear of dismissal.

Lieutenants of Muawiya. Muawiya's choice of his administrators, commanders and governors was very wise and far-sighted. He selected several able persons, among whom three were most prominent, *viz.*, Amr ibn al-As, Mughira ibn Shu'bah and Ziyad.

Amr ibn al-As. He was the governor of Egypt. He sent expeditions against the Berbers of North Africa. Brave on the battlefield and astute in counsel, Amr ibn-al-As never hesitated to use any means for self-aggrandisement. "It was", as Sir Willam Muir says, "mainly to Amr that Muawiya owed his ascendency over Ali, and the eventual establishment of the Umayyad dynasty". He remained the governor of Egypt till his death at the age of 73 years.

Al-Mughira. He was a citizen of Taif, south of Mecca, and an early convert to Islam. He too was very clever, ambitious and powerful. He had joined Muawiya during his civil war with Ali. Muawiya made him a governor of Kufa, which was full of quarreling factions and trouble-makers, mostly Shia partisans and Khariji fanatics. He restored peace in Kufa in a short time. Al-Mughira rendered two services to Muawiya: he reconciled Muawiya's half brother, Ziyad, to him and suggested him to nominate Yezid as his successor.

Ziyad bin Sumayya. He was at first a strong supporter of Ali who had made him Governor of Istakhar (old capital of Persia).

After Hasan's abdication he refused to submit to Muawiya. Later Mughira persuaded him to pay a visit to the capital, Damascus. When Ziyad reached Damascus, Muawiya received him with great honour and gifts and won him over to his side. Ziyad was, as he soon proved, a very clever and able administrator. Though a natural son of Abu Sufyan, Muawiya got him declared a legitimate son of his father. Indeed, he was in need of a strong man to bring peace and order in the turbulent city of Basra, full of quarrels and factions. Muawiya appointed Ziyad its governor in July, 665/ 45 A. H. With a strong hand he soon brought peace to the city and gave it security of life and property. In this work he was helped by the tribe of Azd. Five years later, when Mughira died, Kufa was also placed under Ziyad. Thus he was made the Viceroy of all the Eastern Provinces of the Empire, *viz.*, Iraq, Persia, Khurasan, etc. He maintained a splendid court, like the Persian Chosroes of old. His administration was firm. He suppressed religious factions, like the Shias and the Kharijis, with a strong hand and thus restored the supremacy of the State in these troubled regions. Indeed, as Muir says, he became a pillar of strength to the Umayyad Rule: "powerful, wise, and eloquent, he was by far the ablest statesman of the day". As the Viceroy of the eastern provinces, from Kufa to Kabul, he was, next to the Caliph himself, the most powerful man in the whole Empire. After him, it was Hajjaj alone who rivalled him in the magnitude of power he exercised and the territory he ruled. Ziyad died in the middle of the year 673 A. D., at the age of fifty-eight. Tales of his services were told long after him. He left behind several sons appointed to high posts in Khurasan and Persia.

Conquests under Muawiya. Since the day of Uthman, the third Caliph, the expansion of Muslim Empire had come to a halt. The reason was the civil war between Muawiya and Ali. But with the abdication of Hasan and the restoration of peace and unity in the Empire, the forward policy was resumed by Muawiyya once again: Muslim armies began to march forward both in the East and the West.

Conquests in the East. In the East, Ziyad was the supreme commander. He sent expeditions for the conquest of Mekran, Sistan and Kabul. His son, Ubaydullah, fought wars with the Turks in Sughdiana near the river Oxus. He sent an expedition under Abdur Rehman bin Sumra into Sistan, where Kabul, Ghaznah and Qandahar were captured. Another expedition under Sanan ibn-Salma conquered Mekran and the neighbouring territories of Sind. One of his lieutanants, Muballab bin Abi Sufra attacked Sind. When Ziyad died in 673 A. D. his son Ubaydullah became the Viceroy of the East. Though an equally able administrator, he was nevertheless a cruel person.

Conquests in the West. Muslim historians divided North Africa into three parts: Egypt, which was already conquered by the Muslim, *Ifriqia*, as the Muslims called the central region of North Africa, which included modern Libya and Tunis, and the Far West or *al-Maghrib*, which lay beyond the Atlas mountains and included Morroco and parts of Algeria. These parts were still under Byzantine domination. They were inhabited by the Berber tribes.

Amr bin al-As, the governor of Egypt, sent in 670 an expedition of ten thousand Arabs against the Berbers who were aided by the Byzantines. It was commanded by Uqba bin Nafe, a nephew of Amr. Uqba defeated the Berbers and the Byzantines and captured the port of Barqa in Ifriqia. He then marched still farther west.

Foundation of Qayrowan : 670 A. D./50 A. H. Near old Carthage, Uqba inflicted a decisive defeat on the Berbers. He then founded the city of Qayrowan in 670 A. D , which became the most important garrison-city of the Muslim Empire in North Africa and the seat of the governor of Ifriqia. Uqba continued to march further and reached the Atlantic coast of Mughrib. He returned to Qayrowan where he ruled peacefully as its governor for several years. Long after, in 685 A. D. he died fighting against a revolted Berber tribe near the Altas mountain. Qayrowan was captured by the Berbers and the Arabs withdrew from Ifriqia for some time.

War with the Greeks. Muawiya had often fought with the Byzantines in Asia Minor during his governorship of Syria. After becoming the Caliph, he renewed hostilities with them once again. Every year, in summer, a Muslim expedition was sent into the neighbouring Greek provinces in Asia Minor. But no town or territory was permanently occupied by the Muslims.

Attack on Constantinople : 670 to 680 A. D. The conquest of the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, was one of the ambitions of Muawiya. It was partly because the Greeks and the Arabs were old enemies and partly because Muawiya remembered the words of the Holy Prophet regarding the conquest of this great capital. He made two attempts on the Byzantine capital. In 669 A. D., he raised a formidable army and sent it against the Greeks under the command of his son, Yezid. Several of the Companions, like Abu Ayyub Ansari and sons of Hazrat Umar and Abbass, joined the expedition. A naval fleet supported the Muslim army. The Muslims laid siege to Constantinople which lasted for a few years. In the course of fighting the famous Companion, Abu Ayyub Ansari died. His tomb, built under the walls of Constantinople, was venerated and visited by the Turks till modern times. The Muslims failed to capture Constantinople because of snow, long distance and a long line of supply, but mainly because of a new Greak weapon, which they called the *Greek fire*.

Few years later, a second attack on Constantinople was made across the Mediterranean by a fleet. This naval expedition lasted for seven years, hence called the seven years war (674 to 680 A. D.). It too failed in its objective. During the period the islands of Rhodes, Cyzicus and Crete were temporarily occupied by the Arabs. When Yezid succeeded Muawiya, he recalled the army besieging Constantinople.

Nomination of Yazid as heir-apparent. In 676, Muawiya nominated his son Yazid as his successor. But it was opposed on different grounds by the people of Medina and Mecca. It was really a constitutional innovation. There was no precedent in the elections of the Orthodox Caliphs. Moreover, the election of a caliph was a privilege of the people of Medina which they were not willing to give up. Muawiya, on the contrary, believed that circumstances had greatly changed since the days of the Orthodox Caliphs. Medina was no longer the capital of Islam. The centre of political gravity of the Islamic Empire, and, therefore, the responsibility of its administration, had shifted to Damascus. Hence the Caliph of Damascus should decide what was best for the Empire. Furthermore, there was the danger of a renewed civil war, which might break out after Muawiya's death, as it had after Uthman's. This would divide Islam into warring camps. Lastly, Muawiya desired to retain the caliphate in his own family.

Al-Mughira advised the Caliph to nominate his son as his successor. At first he hesitated, but later he acted on his advice. In 676 A.D. he wrote letters to the governors of the provinces to send deputations to Damascus. Therefore, deputations from the provinces and chief cities like Kufa and Basra, presented themselves before the Caliph. They acknowledged Yezid as the successor of Muawiya and took the oath of fealty at his hands. Only the people of Medina and Mecca refused to do so. Muawiya went to the Holy Cities on the pretext of performing the Lesser Pilgrimage (called Umrah) with a force of 1,000 Syrian horsemen. The show of force was sufficient to make citizens of Mecca and Medina to accept Yezid. But four of them, viz., Imam Husayn, Abdur Rehman-ibn-Abu Bakr, Abdullah bin Umar and Abdullah bin Zubayr refused to do so. One of them, Abdullah bin Zubayr asked Muawiya not to nominate his son. Instead of it, he advised him to follow either the precedent of the Holy Prophet and nominate no one as his successor, and leave the election to the Muslims, or to follow the example of Abu Bakr and nominate some other person than his relative from among the Quraysh, or like Umar, appoint a board of electors to choose his successor. Muawiya rejected this wise suggestion on the plea of the danger of dispute and bloodshed if he did not settle the question of succession in his lifetime. He, however, did not press them to pay homage to Yezid. Before his

death he warned his son to be particularly careful of them.

Significance of Yezid's nomination: The nomination of Yezid was a highly significant event in the history of early Islam. It brought about a constitutional, though peaceful, revolution in the state-structure of Islam. It transformed the Caliphate into a Kingship, albeit an elective one. Henceforward caliphate was no longer an elective and republican institution but became a hereditary one. Hereditary nomination became a precedent for all the successors of Muawiya, Umayyad as well as Abbaside. The principle of election was still preserved but only in appearance. Otherwise the caliphate became a dynastic kingship, because all succeeding caliphs were always elected from within the family of the reigning caliph. In other words, the election of a caliph was determined by no other qualification except family or clan relationship. Really speaking, it was not Muawiya's accession to power in 661 A.D., but his nomination of Yezid as his successor in 676 A. D., that transformed the Caliphate from the Orthodox into an Umayyad one.

During his reign, Muawiya introduced certain other changes in the position and public conduct of the caliph. Though he regularly attended the mosque at prayer-times, and personally read the Khutba on Friday prayers, yet he constructed a royal enclosure called *Maqsurah* so as to keep himself aloof from other Muslims. Moreover, the Caliph as well as his palace were surrounded by a body-guard and personal attendants. This also made the Caliph less accessible than his Orthodox predecessors.

Death of Muawiya: 680 A.D. After a peaceful and prosperous reign of about twenty years, Muawiya breathed his last in April, 680 A. D.

Estimate of Muawiya's character and policy.

Both as a man and as a ruler, Muawiya has been variously estimated by different writers. Syed Ameer Ali writes, "Astute, unscrupulous, clear-headed, miserly but lavishly liberal when necessary, outwardly observant of all religious duties, but never permiting any human or divine ordinance to interfere with the prosecution of his plans or ambitions such was Muawiya. But once firmly seated on the throne and his path clear of all enemies, he applied himself with assiduity to the good government of the Empire." Sir William Muir takes a more lenient view: "Wise, courageous and forbearing, he held the dangerous elements around him in check." Comparing Muawiya with Ali, Muir annotates thus: "Ali was, without doubt, the braver of the two in physical courage; but Muawiya, beyond comparison, the abler and bolder ruler. Muawiya was a politician rather than a soldier. He preferred to gain his end by money rather than by force."

Muawiya had a charming personality. He had a knack to win friends and influence people, even if they were at first hostile towards him. To this end he used not only a shrewd head and a wise tongue but also a lavish hand. Above all, as a ruler, he possessed that rare quality which won the appreciation of his hostile critics and was so dear to the Arab heart, that is, what they called "*hilm*". It was a political virtue of a mild and sane use of force and violence when their use became necessary. Lord Acton once remarked that power corrupts everybody and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Muawiya was one of those absolute rulers in world history to whom Lord Acton's dictum cannot be applied. Though he possessed absolute power, he never exercised it unwisely. On the other hand, he used force with mildness, moderation, and clemency, and on such occasions only when its use was absolutely necessary. He himself remarked in his fascinating way, "I do not use my sword where my lash is sufficient, and I do not use my lash where my tongue is enough. And even if there be one hair binding me to my fellow-men, I do not let it break: when they pull I loosen, and if they loosen I pull." But unfortunately he applied his great qualities of head and heart to personal and dynastic ends rather than to the nobler ends for which the Islamic Empire was built by his great predecessors. Nature had gifted him with the qualities of a great ruler, but he employed them to attain limited ends of his dynastic rule.

Muawiya as Caliph: Muawiya was a caliph of the age of transition, brought about partly by his own acts and policies, and mainly by the changing circumstances of the Empire and the changing attitudes of the majority of Arabs, the real masters of the Empire. Consequently, he introduced some basic changes in the caliphal system of early Islam, for which reason he was no favourite of the medieval Muslim writers and divines. They regard him as the first king in Islam. He transformed what was a spiritual or theocratic state into a secular one, a change which was in their eyes both un-Arabian and un-Islamic, worthy of the foreign potentates and peoples of Rome and Persia. They recorded with obvious disapproval that Muawiya was the first to bedeck himself with such trappings of royalty as a kingly throne, a bodyguard of eunuchs, a squad of soldiers at his palace-gates, a royal pavilion or "*maqsurah*" in the mosque to sit aloof from the commonalty of the Muslims at the time of public prayers and costly costumes of silk and diamonds. And on Fridays he read the *Khutba* while seated—an innovation no pious Muslim would approve. Modern writers have also commented in the same terms on the changes made by Muawiya in the polity of early Islam, through they are usually more interested in their constitutional and political implications than in religious or theological ones. They write; "The accession of Muawiya to the throne at Damascus heralded the end of Khilafat and

the beginning of kingship." Or, "The caliphate of Muawiya is the opening chapter of Muslim Monarchy." It is, indeed, a correct appreciation of what Muawiya did, provided its significance is not exaggerated. Muawiya is said to have himself fully realised the significance of what he had done. Yaqubi writes that he once remarked, "I am the first of the Kings of the Arabs".

Muawiya's Institutions. Muawiya was also accused of certain other constitutional changes in the Islamic polity. For instance, he abolished the Shura or the consultative council of the early Caliphate. But it is an exaggerated charge. What to speak of abolishing the Shura, Muawiya was the first and, unfortunately, the last Caliph to extend this system of government by consultation to the distant parts of his caliphate in those ancient days when there were no mechanical means of communication and transport as they exist in the modern age. This system comprised two parts: a Central Shura, sitting at Damascus as a sort of a permanent parliament and a series of *ad hoc* Provincial Shuras, consisting of a number of representatives from the provinces and principal cities of the caliphate who came to Damascus as the provincial delegations or *Wufud* to advise the Caliph on the urgent matters of the State. It was a veritable though rudimentary parliamentary system. A similar system of consultative Shuras and advisory "Wufud" waited upon the Provincial Governors as they did upon the Caliph in the capital. It was with the aid of this widespread system of consulative councils that Muawiya brought about the basic constitutional change in early Islam, *viz*., the nomination of his son as his successor. "This process", says Professor Bernard Lewis, "is a good example of the way in which his tribal parliamentarism functioned." But, unfortunately, in the fury and fanaticism engendered by the tragic consequences of Yazid's nomination the people forgot the method of the great Caliph but remembered and blamed him for the purpose he used it. For this he was also to be blamed. Unlike the great Umar, he did not employ his parliamentary methods for the greatness of the Muslim Empire but for the preservation of his rule and dynastic succession. Though a sagacious ruler, Muawiya's eyes did not see beyond his thorne and his family. The same was true of his other policies and achievements. To this extent, Hazrat Ali was justly suspicious and apprehensive of him.

As a military organiser, Muawiya was superb. He was the first to organise a naval force to fight against the Greeks on the Mediterranean as early as the Caliphate of Uthman. During his own caliphate he constantly despatched naval expeditions against the Greeks right up to their capital, Constantinople. Thus he wrenched naval supremacy from them in the Eastern Mediterranean. This fact enabled Uqba bin Nafe to advance in North Africa

upto the Atlantic coast. His right flank could no longer be threatened by the Greeks sending men and material across the Mediterranean against the advancing Arab forces and thus giving aid to the Berber tribes of North Africa. Muawiya was also the first caliph in Islam to build a standing army, disciplined and tested in constant warfare in Asia Minor. It was composed of the Syrian Arabs, who were loyal to him and his dynasty. Hitti has rightly observed that "though as a soldier he was certainly inferior to Ali, as a military organiser Muawiya was second to none of his contemporaries."

As an organiser of the governmental machinery, Muawiya had also much to his credit. According to Hitti, "He abolished many traditional features of the government and on the earlier Byzantine framework built a stable, well-organised state. Out of seeming chaos he developed an orderly Moslem society." Arab historians record that he was the first to institute the Diwan al-Khatim, or the Chancery; and the first to interest himself in the postal system, al-Barid, which Abdal-Malik later perfected.

His daily life. The Arab historian, al-Masudi, gives us an interesting sketch of his daily life and interests. First of all, after his morning prayers, he listened to the police-report of the town-commandant. Then came his minister and the members of his Central Shura to transact the business of the State. During breakfast he listened to the reports sent from the provinces read to him by his secretaries. At noon-time he went to the mosque for midday-prayers and sat there till the afternoon-prayers, listening to and deciding all complaints brought before him by the common people. The evenings he spent again with his ministers, councillors and courtiers deciding the affairs of the state. Finally, after a state dinner, he retired to his study and devoted a third part of every night to "the history of the Arabs and their famous battles; the history of foreign peoples, their kings, and their government; the biographies of monarchs, including their wars and stratagems and methods of rule; and other matters connected with Ancient History."

His role and place in Islamic History. Such an intelligent and systematic devotion to the business of the State was sufficient to promote its peace and prosperity. Syed Ameer Ali rightly remarks: "On the whole Muawiya's rule was prosperous and peaceful at home and successful abroad". However, Hitti gives a better appreciation of his place in the subsequent history of Islam. He writes: "To his Umayyad successors he bequeathed a precedent of clemency, energy, astuteness and statesmanship which many tried to emulate, though few succeeded. He was not only the first but also one of the best of Arab kings." In brief, Muawiya

was the founder of the Umayyad Caliphate in the political and constitutional sense, while Abdal Malik was in the administrative sense. But both had one thing particularly in common, *viz*, their secular attitude towards the functions and role of the caliph.

Muawiya's Secularism. In outward appearace, Muawiya acted as a spiritual ruler of the theocratic state of early Islam, but in fact he behaved like a wordly ruler, not much different from the Byzantine and Persian Monarchs. Secularisation of the Islamic State was a feature of his region which shocked the pietist opinion. He and his Umayyad successors with one exception, used their powers and position as the Heads of the Islamic State not to uphold and propagate the principles of Islam or to act according to its teachings, but to strengthen their personal rule, and secure their throne and dynasty. Muawiya substituted the rule of Islamic Faith by the rule of Arab blood. In place of religious ties and social aims of early Islam he substituted the ties of tribal affinity and the sentiments of Arabism, a rudimentary form of Arab nationlism. He built, as Wellhausen says, an Arab Kingdom in place of the Islamic Republic of his Pious predecessors. Although himself a good Muslim, he relied not on the sentiments of Faith but on these of the Arab race and tribal spirit.

His tribal policy. Nevertheless, Muawiya himself did not suffer from the evils of Arab tribalism, as his successors did. It was due to his far-sighted and balanced tribal policy Though an Umayyad he did not shower favours on his Umayyad kinsmen only or showed nepotism towards them. He employed only one of them, Merwan, as his governor, whom he kept away in Hijaz. Though a Qurayshite, he never showed any favours to them either. None of them was ever employed in any high post. His trusted governors and commanders were usually non-Umayyad and non-Qurayshite Arabs. Though a Modharite, he treated both the Modharite and Himyarite tribes with a wise impartiality and kept a balance between them. In order to win the support of the Kelbi or Himyarite tribe in Syria, he married the daughter of their chief, Bahdal. She was Maysun, the mother of Yezid.

His tolerance. Healso showed tolerance towards his non-Muslim subjects, especially the Christians. They were always happy under his rule and brought their disputes before the Caliph for settlement. He rebuilt the church at Edessa, destroyed by an earthquake. He employed Christians in his service. The Arab Christian poets attended his court.

Chapter 36

YEZID I : 680-83 A.D.

SECOND CIVIL WAR : 683-92

Accession of Yezid. After Muawiya's death, his son, Yezid, ascended the throne. He became Caliph not by popular election, but by paternal nomination. Such an accession to the Headship of Islam could not go unchallenged, for it was an innovation in the traditions of the Holy Prophet and of the four Pious Caliphs. Majority of the Muslims were not willing to disregard it. Such a violation of Islamic Caliphate was all the more intolerable in view of Yezid's character and conduct.

Muawiya had married a Bedouin lady of the Kelbi tribe, who became Yezid's mother. Though she dwelt in palatial surroundings, she still pined for the open air of her desert home. Being of poetic turn, she expressed her yearnings in verses in which she disparaged "the obese and bearded men around me", and longed to exchange her desert home for "these gorgeous halls." Muawiya who had become pot-bellied in the later part of his life, resented the ill-concealed taunts of his wife and packed her off to her desert home along with her little child, Yezid. So, he was brought up in the open air of the desert and in the free life of the Bedouins. He acquired the Bedouin tastes and habits, such as the Bedouin love of pleasure, hatred of piety, verging on indifference to religion, expressed in utter disregard for religious laws and teachings. Islam sat as light on Yezid as on any other desert nomad. It was lack of political foresight on Muawiya's part to nominate him as his successor, especially in view of his resolve to subvert all Islamic traditions. So Yezid did not understand Islam and the religious feelings and aspirations of the Muslims over whom he was put as a ruler by his father's will. Yezid had some of the great qualities of his father, but they were nullified by his irreligious behaviour and conduct, his love of hounds and hunting, his light-hearted pleasures of wine and music, all of which were utterly abhorent to the Muslims, many of whom had seen the pious, and simple days of the Holy Prophet (Sm), Abu Bakr, Umar and others. But to all this Yezid was utterly indifferent. He was bent upon one thing—to keep himself on the throne no matter what cruelty, treachery or barbarity he might have to perpetrate. If the murder of Hazrat Uthman opened the doors of *fitna*, the first civil war in Islam, Yezid's accession opened the flood-gates of the second civil war which ended in a perpetual schism in Islam. "His reign" says the Arab

historian, al-Fakhri, "lasted three years and six months. In the first year he slew al-Husayn, the son of Ali (on both of whom be peace !); and in the second year he attacked Medina and looted it for three days; and in the third year he attacked and burnt the Ka'ba."

The Tragedy of Kerbala : 10 Oct. 680 A. D./10 Muh. 61 A. H. It was, indeed, height of imprudence on Muawiya's part to imagine that the Muslims would accept his licentious son to be worthy of being the sixth Successor of the Holy Prophet. He was, however, alive to the fact that Yezid's accession to power would be challenged by the four men, the sons of Abu Bakr, Umar, Ali and Zubayr, who had resisted his pressure in his days. On his deathbed he warned his son to be aware of them, particularly of Husayn and Abdullah bin Zubayr. "As for al-Husain", he said "the restless men of al-Iraq will give him no peace till he attempts for the Caliphate. If you get the upper hand over him, deal gently with him, for truly the blood of the Prophet runs in his veins. It is Abdullah bin Zubayr that you must fear the most. Fierce as the lion, crafty as the fox, destroy him root and branch." As soon as Yezid ascended the throne, he wrote to his governor of Medina to ask them to take oath of fealty to the new caliph. The son of Umar complied with the governor's demand, but Husayn and Ibn Zubayr left Medina for Mecca in order to avoid it.

The Kufans invite Husayn. The people of Kufa hated the rule of Ubaydullah, the son of Ziyad, called "Butcher" by them. They invited Imam Husayn to Kufa to become the caliph and rid them of the hated Umayyads. Husayn sent his cousin, Muslim bin Aqil to Kufa to report on the situation. Muslim wrote that all Kufa was eager to support his claim with 40,000 troops and asked him to reach Kufa as soon as possible. Through his friends tried to dissuade Imam Husayn to trust the fickle Kufans, he decided to proceed to Kufa. While on the way from Mecca to Kufa, he heard of the death of Muslim who was searched out and killed by Ubaydullah's men. But, urged by Muslim's brothers he continued to march towards the treacherous city. At last, at the end of September 680 AD., he approached Kufa, when he found his advance cut off by a troop of Kufan horse. Forced to move to the northwest of Kufa, he finally encamped near the western bank of the Euphrates, several miles to the north of Kufa, near a place called Karbala. The day was the First of Muharram, 61 A. H./October 1, 680 A. D. Imam Husayn's little band of his sons, nephews and other relatives and loyal supporters consisted of about 80 men, women and children. As against this, Ubaydullah sent 4000 troops commanded by Umar bin Sa'd. They surrounded the little band in order to cut off its access to water of the Euphrates and compel it to surrender unconditionally to the Tyrant.

Battle of Kerbala: For ten days the helpless Imam faced his enemies, among whom were many who had invited him to this tragic situation. He wrote to Ubaydullah to allow him either to return to Mecca, or to proceed to the court of Yezid at Damascus or to go to Khurasan to fight the enemies of Islam on the frontiers of the Empire. But the governor demanded nothing except unconditional surrender. This, however, the Imam refused to do. The unequal contest continued, till on the tenth day, the Tenth of Muharram, when all his brothers, sons and nephews had died before his eyes, the great Imam also met a hero's death at the hands of his heartless enemies. His head was cut off, along with those of his other martyred relatives. A thrill of horror ran through the crowd when the gory head of the Prophet's grandson was cast at Ubaydullah's feet. Hard hearts were melted. But not Ubaydullah's who tried to roll the Imam's head with his staff. At this an old man in the assembly cried: "Gently! It is the Propet's grandson. By Allah, I have seen these very lips kissed by the blessed mouth of Muhammad." Even the English historian, Gibbon, is touched to write: "In a distant age and climate the tragic scene of the death of Husayn will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader."

Thus died a martyr's death Imam Husayn along with all his male relatives with the solitary exception of his sick son of six years, named Ali who was later designated Zayn-ul-Abideen, "the ornament of the pious." He was born of Shahr Banu, the daughter of Yazdjard III, the last of the Sassanids of Ancient Persia. So, on his grand-mother's side, he represented the claims of the Fatamids or the Ahl al-Bayt to the Headship of Islam, and on his mother's side, he represented the claims of the Sassanids to the Sovereignty of Iran. This fact alone was enough to show that though Yezid, in the struggle for the throne, had won a battle but had lost the war, as subsequent events proved it. The Governor sent Husayn's female relatives and child to Yezid at Damascus.

Yezid received the news of Imam Husayn's martyrdom with feigned horror, and received his bereaved women and child with honour. After a few days' stay in the Umayyad capital, they were sent to Medina. The grief-stricken citizens of Medina received them with a great outburst of grief and lamentation.

Consequences of Kerbala. The Tragedy of Kerbala was apparently, a victory for Yezid over a rival for the throne. But in the long run it proved to be a Phyrric victory. Some sixty years after, it literally drowned the Umayyads in blood and utter destruction. If on the field of Kerbala they won the battle for the throne, on the field of the Zab they lost the war for it, in the person of the Abbasides who professed to be 'the avengers of the Ahl al-Bayt".

The battle of Kerbala, proved to be a political disaster for the Islamic State, for the Umayyad Caliphate and, later for many a Muslim kingdom after the fall of the Umayyads. "The tragedy of Kerbala" writes Sir William Muir, "decided not only the fate of the Caliphate, but of Mohammaden kingdoms long after the Caliphate had waned and disappeared.''

The rise of Shiaism. Secondly, the Tragedy of Kerbala rent Islam into two and gave rise to the Shia sect. The schism in Islam was now irreparable. The Shias of Ali became not a party but a sect of Islam. The Umayyads had placed a sharp and double-edged weapon in the hands of their bitter enemies, whose number increased from year to year as time passed. As Hitti writes, "The blood of Husayn even more than that of his father, proved to be the seed of the Shi'ite Church". With the clock-like repetitions, the yearly mournings of the Shia during the ten days of Muharram sent shudders through the body-politique of Islam, rending its political and religious unity.

Revival of Persian Nationalism. The ways of history are always strange. The battle of Kerbala was really a struggle between the two groups of Arabs. But in course of time it assumed the form of a racial and national struggle between the two races and nations of Arabia and Persia. "The butchery of Kerbala" writes Syed Ameer Ali, "caused a thrill of horror throughout Islam, and gave birth in Persia to a national sentiment which afterwards helped the descendants of Abbas to destroy the Umayyads." It really infused a new spirit of revolt into the subjudgated nation of Persia, proud of its glorious past and full of hatred for its Arab masters. Hitherto Persians could find none to inspire them to national unity and war against them. Henceforth, however, they found the men and the cause of the Ahl-al Bayt to make as their own in their bitter struggle to liberate themselves from the hated Arab rule of the Umayyads. This struggle of the resurgent Persianism first expressed itself in the unsuccessful revolt of al-Mukhtar, then of Abu Muslim Khurassani and the rise of the Abbasside Caliphate and finally, after a long interval, in the rise of Shi'ite Persia of the Middle Ages. Thus the Shia battle-cry "Vengeance for Husayn" reverberated throughout the Umayyad Empire rallying the Persian Mawali to free themselvefs from the hated yoke of the Arabs.

The immediate result of the Tragedy of Kerbala was the revolt of the Holy Cities of Medina and Mecca, led by Abdullah bin Zubayr.

Significance of Kerbala. The events of the Battle of Kerbala make a sad commentary on Muslim character. The atrocities and barbarities which the Kufan soldiery inflicted on the ill-fated grand-

children of the Holy Prophet, whom they have themselves invited, showed to what depths they had fallen from the teachings and precepts of Islam. It was, indeed, a reversion to the pagan days of the Age of Ignorance, Tolerance, clemency to a helpless enemy, forbearance, and forgiveness and other virtues which Islam taught were forgotten by the Umayyad soldiers and commanders. Muslims fought with the Muslims and the Umayyads fought for the throne in a merciless and inhuman manner of the pre-Islamic Arabs. The Umayyads forgot the clemeney which the Holy Prophet had shown them after the Fall of Mecca. They recompensed it by the barbarous treatment of his grand-children. Surely, "the incident of Kerbala is a blot on the fair name of Islam". It reveals a deep-seated malaise which seemed to be creeping into the body-politique of Islam.

Sack of Medina. The revolt of the two Holy Cities of Medina and Mecca was led by Abdullah bin Zubayr. As soon as the woe-stricken survivors of Husayn's family, the women and his little son, reached Medina, there was a general lamentation in Medina and Mecca. Abdullah bin Zubayr harangued the citizens to revolt and overthrow the rule of the murderous Yezid. Informed of their bitter feelings, Yezid sent a conciliatory governor. The governor persuaded the citizens of Medina to send a delegation to Yezid in Damascus. Though loaded with gifts, they returned to Medina to report of Yezid's love for hounds and hunting, wine and music. Thereupon the Ansars and the Quraysh of Medina, led by Abdullah bin Hanzala, immediately revolted against the ungodly Caliph of Damascus, and drove out the families of the Umayyads from the city. Upon this Yezid despatched a Syrian army about 12000 strong against the rebellious city, commanded by Muslim bin Uqba al-Murri. In a battle fought at Harrah, a place in the north-eastern outskirts of Medina, the Syrians inflicted a defeat on the combined force of the Ansars and the Quraysh. Then they entered Medina, sacked it for three days, during which they inflicted all sorts of barbarities upon the men, women and children of the families of the Companions of the Prophet. It was as if not the Muslim Arabs but the Christian Byzantines had won a victory over the Holy city of Islam.

Attack on Mecca. After the sack of Medina, Muslim bin Uqba advanced with his Syrians towards Mecca, as he was instructed by Yezid to attack it. He died on the way and another Syrian commander, Husayn bin Numair as-Sakuni took his place. In Mecca Abdullah bin Zubayr had already proclaimed himself Caliph. The Syrians laid siege to the Holy City. They hurled stones and fire into it, which burnt down a part of Ka'ba. The siege lasted for two months. But before they could capture the city, the news of Yezid's death reached Mecca. The Syrians were thrown into confusion for there was no caliph to succeed Yezid. At this critical

juncture, the Syrian commander, Ibn Numair offered Abdullah bin Zubayr the choice of being elected caliph by the Syrians provided he agreed to accompany them to Damascus. Ibn Zubayr, who loved Mecca more than Damascus, rejected the offer. The Syrians raised the siege and returned home, leaving Ibn Zubayr as the undisputed master of Hijaz. For nine years (683-692 A. D.) Abdullah bin Zubayr remained as a sort of Anti-Caliph of Mecca. During this time, the Umayyad Caliphate passed through a nadir of its fortune, for Yezid's death had thrown it into a period of confusion and crisis.

Muawiya II. After Yezid's death, his son, named Muawiya II, was proclaimed Caliph. He was a sickly youth of pious temperament. He abdicated the throne within three months of his accession leaving the caliphate without a ruler and the Umayyads without any nominated heir-apparent to succeed him. In the meanwhile, Abdullah bin Zubayr was hailed as Caliph by the whole of Hejaz, Basra, Egypt, and finally Kufa. Even half of Syria was inclined towards him. Had he gone to Damascus, the Umayyad Caliphate would have been swept off the pages of history in the vortex of anti-Umayyad feelings, engendered by the three tragic events of Yezid's tyranny. But Ibn Zubayr refused to do so, and the fickle fortune began to smile upon the Umayyads once again. Thus their caliphate literally arose from the ashes of his Second Civil War, which was, in the final analysis, of Muawiya's doing when he nominated Yezid as his successor.

CHAPTER 37

SECOND CIVIL WAR CONTINUES

Merwan bin Hakam : 683-85 A.D.

Umayyad Caliphate in the doldrums. The abdication of Muawiya II created a crisis for the Umayyad Caliphate. It was, so to say, a double crisis. To the Civil War, which now raged between the Umayyads and the anti-Caliph, Abdullah bin Zubayr, was added a dynastic crisis. The second son of Yezid, named Khalid, was a mere boy of nine and, therefore, too young to be made a caliph at this critical juncture of the Umayyad rule. Political, religious and dynastic confusion prevailed almost in all the provinces of the Empire. The people of Basra and Kufa drove out Ubaydullah bin Ziyad from Iraq after Yezid's death: Basra accepted Ibn Zubayr as Caliph, while the Shia rose into power in Kufa. The Kharijis once again spread terror throughout Iraq and South Persia. In Hijaz, Ibn Zubayr, the Caliph of Mecca, became supreme. Egypt also accepted him as Caliph. The tribes in Syria, the mainstay of the Umayyads were gravely divided in their allegiance. The Northern Arab tribes, called the Qays, led by their chief, named Dhahhak, favoured Ibn Zubayr's caliphate, while the Southern tribes, called the Kelb, led by Ibn Bahdal, the maternal uncle of Yezid's son, Khalid, favoured the Umayyads so as to keep the throne for Ibn Bahdal's nephew, Khalid. But he was too young to be placed on it as yet. It was such a state of confusion and divided allegiance, which a contemporary poet described in the following couplet:—

They are split in sects, each province hath its own

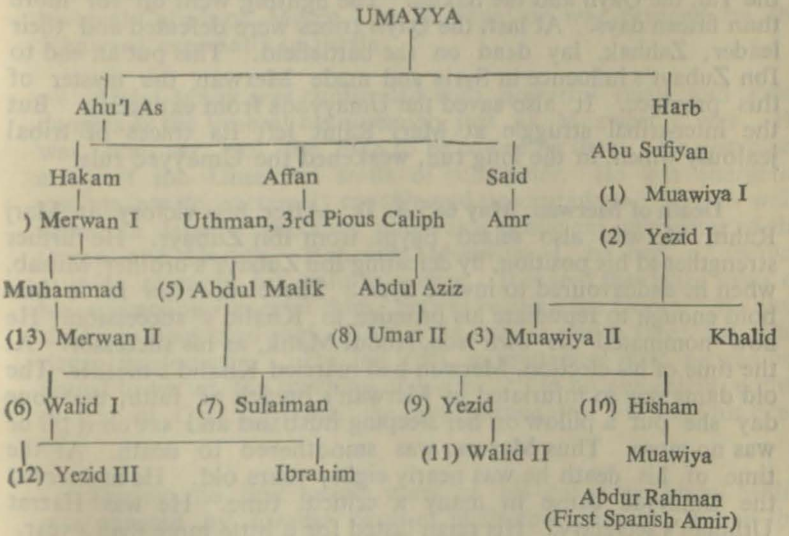
Commander of the Faithful, each its throne.

Election of Merwan. After the death of Muawiya II his younger brother, Khalid, a little boy, was elected caliph at Damascus. But the chiefs of the Umayyad clan did not favour him, for they wanted an elderly man to succeed. Ibn Zubayr's lack of foresight provided them with one. He was Merwan bin Hakam. He was driven out of Medina, along with other Umayyads, by Ibn Zubayr. He came to Syria. He was still so convinced of the success of Ibn Zubayr that he even thought of submitting to him. At this juncture Ubaydullah bin Ziyad, driven out of Basra, arrived at al-Jabiya in Syria where the Umayyads had gathered. He dissuaded Merwan from paying homage to Ibn Zubayr and persuaded other Umayyad

chiefs to elect him as the caliph.

There were three claimants to the Umayyad throne: Khalid who was not acceptable due to his minority, Amr bin Said and Merwan. Khalid's uncle, Ibn Bahdal, agreed to Merwan's succession, because Khalid's claim to the throne was recognised after him. Thus a compromise was made, and Merwan was elected as caliph by all the different branches of the Umayyads. The House of Umayya retained the caliphate, but the Sufyanids, the children of Muawiya, were replaced by the Hakamites, another branch of the Umayyads.

The following genealogical table of the House of Umayya illustrates this dynastic revolution:—



Thus, without merit or will of his own, Merwan became the caliph in Damascus after his expulsion from Medina. This dynastic change was more a result of accident than design. Two men played important role in this change, *viz.*, Ubaydullah bin Ziyad who persuaded Merwan not to return to Ibn Zubayr but himself become a caliph and Ibn Bahdal. He was the leader of the Yemeni tribes in Syria and brought over his Kelbi tribe to Merwan's support, who was at this time a caliph without an army.

Battle of Marj Rahit : July, 684 A.D. Although Merwan was proclaimed Caliph, who did not extend much farther than the walls of al-Jabiya. The Syrian tribes were divided into two halves

in their allegiance to the new Umayyad Caliph. The Yemeni tribes, led by Ibn Behdal, rallied under Marwan. But the Northern tribes, the Qays, led by their chief, az-Zahhak, supported Ibn Zubayr's caliphate. Had Ibn Zubayr come to Syria, be would have been acclaimed as caliph by all tribes. But his reluctance to leave the Holy Cities proved to be an opportunity for the Umayyads under Merwan to defeat his supporters, Zahhak and his Qaysi tribes.

Zahhak left Damascus with his Qaysi tribes, which included the Sulaym, the Amir (Hawazin) and the Dhubyan. He took up a position at Marj Rahit, near Damascus. After some time, Merwan also moved against him from al-Jabiya along with its Kelbi tribes, which included the Kelb, the Ghassan, the Tanukh, the Tai, the Qayn and the Sakun. The fighting went on for more than fifteen days. At last, the Qaysi tribes were defeated and their leader, Zahhak, lay dead on the battlefield. This put an end to Ibn Zubayr's influence in Syria and made Merwan the master of this province. It also saved the Umayyads from extinction. But the inter-tribal struggle at Marj Rahit left its traces of tribal jealousy which, in the long run, weakened the Umayyad rule.

Death of Merwan, May 685 A. D. After his victory at Marj Rahit, Merwan also seized Egypt from Ibn Zubayr. He further strengthened his position, by defeating Ibn Zubayr's brother, Musab, when he endeavoured to invade Syria. These successes made him bold enough to repudiate his promise to Khalid's succession. He now nominated his own son, Abdul Malik, as his successor. At the time of his election, Merwan had married Khalid's mother. The old dame was so infuriated by Merwan's breach of faith, that one day she put a pillow on her sleeping husband and sat on it till he was no more. Thus Merwan was smoothered to death. At the time of his death he was nearly eighty years old. He had served the Umayyad cause in many a critical time. He was Hazrat Uthman's secretary. His reign lasted for a little more than a year.

CHAPTER 38

ABDUL MALIK

685-705 A. D./65-86 A. H.

The End of the Second Civil War : 685-92 A. D.

Accession and character of Abdul Malik. On Merewan's death, his son, Abdul Malik, became the Caliph. But his rule did not extend beyond Syria and Egypt. The Second Civil War still raged in the Empire. Most of the Empire was in the hands of his rival Caliph of Mecca, Ibn Zubayr, or was ravaged by the Khawarij, especially in Persia.

Abdul Malik was confronted with powerful rivals and great dangers at the time of his accession, just as Muawiya I was. He was, however, not the man to be cowed by them. He possessed many of the Umayyad traits of character. He was energetic, resolute, astute, extremely capable and unscrupulous. He was well-versed in Islamic theology and was a proficient interpreter of the Quran and Hadith. But, like Muawiya I, he had a secular attitude towards his caliphal office. It is said that when news of his succession reached him, he was reciting the Quran. He shut the Holy Book and said, "This is my last time with thee; we shall never meet again." He felt that in matters of state, he was not bound to act on the teaching of Islam. "Let no one enjoin equity or fear of God upon me," he once warned, "or I will cut his head off."

During the first seven years of his caliphate, Abdul Malik was opposed by several kinds of rivals and enemies. Within the Arab Empire his enemies were Abdullah bin Zubayr, the rival Caliph of Mecca, the Shia factions and leaders, like al-Mukhtar in Kufa, the Khawarij in Iraq and Persia and Musab, Ibn Zubayr's brother and governor of Basra. Outside the Empire, the Greeks threatened to invade Syria.

Confronted with these dangers and enemies, Abdul Malik adopted a policy of making peace with the Byzantines by agreeing to pay a thousand dinars as an annual tribute. This freed him from the external danger and enabled him to devote his thought and energy against his internal enemies. By his intrigues against his rivals, he tried to win their supporters to his side and then at a suitable opportunity to attack and destroy them. Iraq was

the first province where he applied his policy of patient intrigues and timely military action.

Abdul Malik re-unites the Caliphate

Events in Iraq. The turbulent province of Iraq was at this time most turbulent. Abdul Malik left it to Ibn Zubayr to deal with it as best as he could. Basra supported him and he had made his brother Musab, its governor. But the Kharijis were constantly threatening it from Ahwaz, the southern province of Persia which was ravaged by them. Kufa had also accepted Ibn Zubayr as caliph. His hold on Kufa, however, was weakened by the rise of the Shia factions.

Rise of the Penitents in Kufa : 684 A. D. In the last days of Merwan's reign, the Kharijis of Kufa were struck with remorse and repentance for their failure to protect Imam Husyan during the desperate days of Kerbala. They gathered at his tomb. They wailed loudly and vowed to wreak vengeance on his Umayyad murders in Syria; hence they called themselves 'Tawwabeen' or "Penitents." They were 5000 strong. They marched on Syria. They were met near Qirqisia by a force sent by Merwan, and were utterly routed. A few only escaped alive to Kufa. The defeat of the Penitent Shia opened the way to the rise of another "Avenger" of the House of Ali. He was al-Mukhtar.

Al-Mukhtar and the Emergence of the Mawali. At this time arose a man, named al-Mukhtar, who symbolised the new force in early medieval Islamic History, the Persian Mawali. Like Ziyad and Hajjaj, al-Mukhtar was a native of Taif, and belonged to the Thaqifi tribe. But, unlike them, he sympathised with the underdogs of the Umayyad society, the Persian Mawali or neo-Muslims of the Persian origin, who now entered as a new force in the troubled politics of Iraq. Mukhtar rose to power in Kufa with the Shia battle-cry of "vengeance for Husayn."

He was an ambitious adventurer, ready to change sides as opportunity required. At first he was with al-Hasan, but later went over to Muawiya. In the days of Kerbala, he again sided with al-Husayn, for which reason he was thrown into prison by Ubaydullah and treated so cruelly that he lost one of his eyes. He vowed to wreak vengeance upon Ubaydullah by cutting him to pieces. He then escaped from Kufa to Mecca. However, Ibn Zubayr did not trust him. He returned to Kufa once again with a letter from Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiya, a son of Hazrat Ali, and thus collected a party of Shias around him. When the Penitents were utterly crushed, he stepped forth as an "Avenger" of the Ahl al-Bayt. In this way he acquired supreme power in

Kufa, which was then virtually in the hands of the Shias.

Soon after coming to power, al-Mukhtar sent an army against Ubaydullah bin Ziyad, his old enemy, who was then marching towards Kufa from Mosul in Northern Iraq. It was commanded by Ibrahim bin al-Ashtar, a pious and staunch supporter of the Ahl al-Bayt. No sooner had the army departed from Kufa than the enemies of the Alides revolted. Mukhtar hurriedly recalled Al-Ashtar and crushed the anti-Shia revolt and then executed all those who had participated in the Tragedy of Kerbala, like Shimr, Umar bin Sa'd and other murderers of Imam Husayn. It is said that 284 of such miscreants were put to death by al-Mukhtar, who thus justified his title of the "Avenger of the House of Ali." He then again sent the army of Ibrahim al-Ashtar against Ubaydullah, who was utterly defeated in a battle near the Zab, in Northern Iraq in August, 686 A. D. His head was cut off and thrown before Mukhtar at the same place where he had insulted the head of Imam Husayn nearly six years ago. These successes made al-Mukhtar the master of Mesopotamia, but they also changed the character of Shia-ism.

Fall of al-Mukhtar: March, 687 A. D. The Shia-ism of al-Mukhtar was of the extremist form. He worshipped such 'symbols' as the 'chair' of Hazrat Ali. These 'symbols' appealed more to his Persian followers than to the aristocratic Arab Shias. Hence Mukhtar now relied more upon his Persian followers, which alienated the support of the Arab aristocracy in Kufa. The proud Arab nobles intrigued with Musa'b, the governor of Basra, whom they invited to come to their rescue. Hitherto Mukhtar had pretended to be loyal to Ibn Zubayr. But after his victory over Ubaydullah, he renounced his allegiance to the Caliph of Mecca. So Ibn Zubayr permitted his brother, Musa'b, to march against Mukhtar in response to the appeal of the Arab aristocrats. Musa'b with the support of his able general, Muhallab, inflicted a defeat on Mukhtar's army near Kufa and forced him to retreat. Mukhtar, now deserted by his Arab supporters, shut himself up in the fort of Kufa along with 8000 followers, mostly Persians. They were besieged for several months. At last, driven by starvation, Mukhtar called upon his followers to march out. Only nineteen men followed him and met a hero's death outside, while the remaining 8000 followers of Mukhtar surrendered. Musa'b put all of them, including 700 Arabs among them, to death. This was a blot on the fair name of Musa'b, who was otherwise a gallant Arab leader. But it showsed the Arab hatred for the Persian Mawali who dared to be equal of the aristocratic Arabs. Thus the whole of Iraq was brought under the rule of Ibn Zubayr.

Significance of Mukhtar's rise. The meteoric rise and fall

of al-Mukhtar illustrates (i) the influence of the tragedy of Karbala on the later history of Islam, (ii) the power of the Shia rallying cry of "vengeance for the House of Ali", and (iii) the advent of the new Muslims, the Mawali, into the politics of Islam, in order to seek justice and equality with the aristocratic Arabs. As this was denied to them, they allied themselves more and more with the Shias and became the champions of the rights and claims of the Ahl al-Bayt, as the later history of the Umayyads would reveal. For the time being, however, Arab aristocracy remained supreme and literarily drowned in blood the revolt of the Persian Mawali under al-Mukhtar.

Condition of the Empire in 688 A. D. Abdullah Ibn Zubayr had also no easy time in Persia at the hands of the Khawarij. At first they supported his caliphate. But when he refused to justify Uthman's murder, they revolted against him also and ravaged Basra and southern Persia. Musa'b despatched his able general Muhalib against them. But he could barely hold his own against these fierce fanatics.

The divided condition of the Empire was dramatically illustrated in the annual pilgrimage at Mecca in 688 A. D./68 A. H. It is said that four different leaders, representing the Umayyad Caliph, Abdul Malik, the Meccan Caliph, Ibn Zubayr, the Shi'ite Imam Mohammad ibn al-Hanafiya and of the Khariji Caliph, Najda, who ruled South Arabia, led four parties of pilgrims.

Abdul Malik's initial troubles: While the bloody events were happening in Kufa, Abdul Malik remained a mere spectator. He had his own troubles. He suppressed the Qaysi tribes finally. The Greek emperor threatened to invade Syria. Abdul Malik brought peace by agreeing to pay him one thousand dinars as an annual tribute. At last when Musa'b defeated Mukhtar, Abdul Malik decided to march against him. But he had hardly left Damascus, when news reached him that his Umayyad rival, Amr bin Said, had revolted and captured Damascus. The Caliph hurriedly returned to the capital and treacherously arrested and put to death his rebellious cousin, Amr bin Said, with his own hands. Amr was promised by Merwan succession after him, but Merwan nominated Abdul Malik in his stead. His execution finally removed a dangerous rival from his path. But it cast a dark blot on Abdul Malik's name, for he was not otherwise a cruel or hard-hearted man. Nevertheless, it made Syria secure and enabled him to march against Kufa.

Caliph's campaign against Musa'b : 691 A. D. More than a year passed between Amr bin Said's execution and Abdul Malik's march on Kufa. Abdul Malik utilized this interval

in undermining Musa'b's position. He wrote letters and sent secret agents with bribes and many promises of reward to the people and personalities in Kufa, inciting them to break away from Musa'b. At last, in October, 691 A. D., the Caliph led an army against the governor of Kufa. Musa'b tried to summon Muhallab to his aid, but the latter was too busy with the Khawarij. He marched out of Kufa and the two forces met each other on the borders of Syria. The letters, secret agents and promises had done their work among Musa'b's men, many of whom were secretly in league with Abdul Malik. They defected to his side on the battlefield, leaving Musa'b, his son, and Ibn al-Ashtar alone to fight the Caliph. All of them were killed. Musa'b's head was cut off and sent to Syria. Musa'b was a brave and handsome man and deserved a better fate. He was the husband of Sakina, the daughter of al-Husayn. After his death, the city of Kufa surrendered to Abdul Malik, followed by Basra and the rest of the eastern provinces. Only the Kharijis in South Persia and Ibn Khazim, Ibn Zubayr's governor, did not do so.

Attack on Ibn Zubayr and the End of the Civil War: 692 A. D. Ibn Zubayr remained supinely inactive when his brother was attacked and destroyed by Abdul Malik. But his end too was now near. Before Abdul Malik left Kufa for Damascus he sent an army against him under the command of Hajjaj bin Yousaf, an able officer. Hajjaj first went to Taif, his native place, in January, 692. From there he wrote a letter to Abdullah bin Zubayr in which he promised pardon if he submitted to the Caliph of Damascus. Ibn Zubayr declined the offer. On this Hajjaj wrote to Abdul Malik for permission to attack the Holy City and also for more troops. The Caliph gave the permission and sent reinforcements. Hajjaj laid siege to Mecca. It lasted for several weeks, during which the Kā'ba was also burnt down. At last after a hard struggle, in which many of his supporters deserted him, Ibn Zubayr fought and died a hero's death with a handful of loyal supporters. His head was also cut off and sent to Damascus, as it had now become a fashion to deal with fallen foes. He was seventy-two at the time of his death.

Character of Ibn Zubayr : and causes of his failure. For nine years Ibn Zubayr had been the rival Caliph of Mecca. Pietist traditions regard him as a rightful caliph of Islam. There is some justification for it. Unlike the Umayyads, he did not shift his capital from the Holy Cities of Islam. His rule resembled the reign of the early Caliphs. He was a grandson of Hazrat Abu Bakar; his mother, Asma, was his daughter. There was much to admire in his character. He was brave and heroic, and possessed a strong sense of justice. He had also some shortcomings and weaknesses of character and policy which cost him his life and

caliphate. Though shrewd, he was inactive and miserly; and though ambitious, he was not far-sighted and statesmanly. He failed to judge men and events properly. He had an exaggerated notion of the role of the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina in the politics of Islam in his days. He completely failed to see that the political importance which they possessed in the days of the Holy Prophet and the Orthodox Caliphs, had since long vanished. He failed to notice that the centre of political gravity in the Muslim Empire had long shifted from Medina and Mecca to Damascus. Doubtless Ibn Zubayr intended to restore the Holy Cities to their lost position and prestige, but his death finally showed as Wellhausen says, that "the Hijaz had been a lifeless province since the murder of Uthman and could not be again made the centre-point of the political life." Herein also lies the secret of Umayyads' success in capturing the Empire from the hands of their enemies twice in thirty years, first under Muawiya and later under Abdul Malik. Finally, Ibn Zubayr committed several blunders of policy, such as his failure to accompany the Syrians to Damascus after Yezid's death, his lack of foresight in driving Merwan and other Umayyads from Medina, his lack of statesmanship in not taking advantage of the internal quarrels of the Umayyads, and his failure to come to the aid of his brother, Musa'b, when he was attacked by Abdul Malik.

The death of Ibn Zubayr put the Second Civil War to an end. Abdul Malik was now the undisputed master of the whole Islamic Empire. Ibn Khazim, Ibn Zubayr's governor of Khorassan was defeated in a tribal battle and that province also passed into the hands of the Umayyad Caliph.

The Khawarij. Only one internal enemy remained to be suppressed. They were the Kharijis. But they were not fighting for sovereignty of the Islamic Empire, nor they were united among themselves. They fought against Ibn Zubayr, and when Abdul Malik took his place in Iraq and Persia, they fought against him as well, with their usual reckless, wild and invincible fanaticism. They were opposed to the Umayyads, for their rule was in their eyes un-Islamic, and because their governors, like Hajjaj, were tyrannical and oppressive. They sought to restore the rule of the days of Umar, headed by a caliph elected by the people at large or by a Council of Elders, like the early Shura. However, all this was not for worldly gain but for the salvation of their souls. They were brave and fanatic and a constant source of terror and lawlessness for the Umayyad administrators and commanders. The only thing which saved the Umayyad rulers from the Kharijis was their readiness not only to fight against the hated Umayyads but also among themselves with equal fury and fanaticism. This fact enabled Muhallab to crush them in the long run.

After the fall of Ibn Zubair, his able general, Muhallab whom he had appointed to crush the Kharijis, submitted to Abdul Malik, and was entrusted with the same task by the latter. Muhallab undertook a prolonged campaign against a Khariji sect, called the Azariqa, in South Persia, during 695-697 A. D. The governor of Iraq, Bishr bin Merwan, a brother of the Caliph, did not willing co-operate with Muhallab in the war against the Kharijis. The soldiers of Kufa and Basra usually deserted Muhallab and returned home, leaving him to fight with his own followers against the fierce Kharijis. The Caliph was, therefore, in search of a man who would render greater aid to Muhallab. So when Bishr died in 695 A. D., the Caliph appointed Hajjaj bin Yusuf in his place.

Hajjaj bin Yusuf, as Governor of Iraq. After the defeat of Ibn Zubayr, Hajjaj remained in Hijaz as its governor, from where he was transferred to Iraq in 695 A. D., to deal with the Khariji trouble. He at once set out for Kufa to teach the disloyal Kufans a lesson in obedience. He appeared in the mosque of Kufa *incognito*, his face covered by a sheet and with the dust of the desert-journey. The people look him for a Khariji and were about to throw stones at him, when he revealed his face. Then he rose to address the people, in which he threatened: "By God! I see glances fixed upon me, and necks stretched forward, and heads ripe for the reaping, ready to be cut off, and I am the man to do it!" Then he added the foreboding words, "Methinks I see blood between the turbans and the beards. I see many widows and orphans among you." Finally, he uttered the warning to those who had deserted Muhallab's army: "Whoever of those deserters from the standard still shows his face after three days in the town, his life and property shall be forfeited." The Arabs know their man. It is said that so many men thronged the bridge across the Euphrates to join Muhallab's army that for three days traffic could not come from the opposite side. Only one aged man still lingered behind in Kufa and he was duly hanged for it. Hajjaj next went to Basra where similar threats and warning had their desired effect. The disloyal Iraqis now flocked to Muhallab's army, fighting against the Khawarij. Thus, as an Arab historian, Ibn Qutayba, puts it, Hajjaj "restored order in Iraq and subdued its people."

In spite of reinforcements, Muhallab could not suppress the Kharijis immediately, for their resistance was stubborn and their spirit desperate. However, their internal dissensions came to his aid. The Azariqa sect split into two over a minor theological dispute and one party of them, led by Qatri, went away to Tabaristan. The remaining Khariji party, led by Abdaraba, was attacked by Muhallab and cut to pieces. A few of them fled to Kirman, but were pursued and destroyed. Hajjaj was pleased with Muhallab and appointed him as governor of Khurasan.

Khariji revolt in North Iraq: While Muhallab was fighting against the Kharijis in South Persia, another Khariji band, consisting mainly of Banu Shayban of Bakr, led by their chief, Shebib bin Yezid, revolted in Mesopotamia. He constantly raided important towns in North Iraq, between Kufa and Mosul. Hajjaj fought a longdrawn and obstinate war against him during 695-97 A. D. Although Shebib's men were outnumbered by Hajjaj's armies sent against them, they inflicted many defeats and reverses on them. On two occasions, Shebib even entered the city of Kufa and sacked it. Hajjaj was compelled to seek the Caliph's aid and asked for Syrian troops to defend the province, for the Kufan army failed to hold its own against Shebib. At last, with the help of the Syrians, Hajjaj drove Shebib from North Iraq. He fled towards Ahwaz, but while crossing the river, he was drowned in it. Thus the Khariji insurrections were finally crushed in Iraq and Persia. The Qatri band in Tabaristan was also destroyed at this time. For a long time to come the Khawarij did not give any significant trouble to the Umayyad administrators. However, many of them fled to North Africa. There they spread their seditious teachings among the Berbers, who were at this time adopting Islam in large numbers.

War against Zanbil, king of Zabulistan: Zanbil, the king of Sistan whose rule extended from Kabul to Qandhar and Zaranj, or Zabulistan, ceased to pay tribute to the Caliph during the Civil War. Having suppressed the Khawarij, Hajjaj sent an army against him, but it was routed by the king.[1] To avenge this defeat, Hajjaj sent another army in 699 A. D., which was so splendidly equipped that it was known as the "Peacock Army". It was composed of the people of Kufa and Basra, who did not like to go so far away from their homes. It was commanded by Abdurrahman bin Mohammad bin al-Ashath, a grandee of Kufa. Ibn al-Ashath moved cautiously into the territory of the king of Sistan, which angered Hajjaj. He wrote a harsh letter to him and threatened to remove him from command. The commander read out Hajjaj's letter to his army, which was already resentful of Hajjaj's severities. There was an instantaneous revolt against Hajjaj, "the enemy of God and man" as they called him.

Rebellion of Ibn al-Ashath: 699-701 A.D. Instead of marching against Zanbil, the Peacock Army wheeled round and marched

1. One reason why Hajjaj tried to conquer Zanbil's kingdom of Sistan or Zabulistan, as it was called, was to make it a base for the conquest of the lands of South Asian sub-continent. A recent author writes, "For Sistan he (Hajjaj) probably had in mind a plan similar to that of Ziyad ibn Abi Sufyan, i.e. to settle Arab tribesmen there, who would eventually bring Zabulistan into the Islamic domains, and from there to strike deep into India." Cf. M. A. Shaban, *The Abbasid Revolution*, p. 54. But Hajjaj's plan failed partly because of Zanbil's resistance, but mainly because of the incipient degeneration of the Arab *muqatila* warriors and the disintegrative trends of the Umayyad Caliphate.

against Hajjaj. It carried everything before it and captured Tustar and Basra where the citizens welcomed the rebels. They then advanced upon Kufa. It was a very critical moment for the Umayyad Caliphate. For some time, Abdul Malik even thought of accepting the demands of the rebels to dismiss Hajjaj and to grant the Iraqis the same pay as given to the Syrians. But the rebels rejected all offers of peace, for they were bent upon wiping out the Umayyad rule from Iraq. This made the Caliph send the Syrian troops to Hajjaj, as he had already asked for. With the Syrian army, Hajjaj at last inflicted a defeat upon the rebel force near Kufa in March, 701 A. D. Ibn Ashath fled to Sistan, where he took refuge with Zanbil, but was later killed. Most of the rebels surrendered and the city of Basra and others were recaptured by Hajjaj.

The rebellion of the 'Peacock Army' was ignited by Hajjaj's harsh rule, the unequal treatment of the Iraqis by their Umayyad rulers who showered favours and higher pensions on the Syrians. It was a desperate attempt of the Iraqis to shake off the hated Umayyad rule which appeared as the rule of the Syrians, the rivals of the people of Iraq. But its failure further fastened the Umayyad hold on Iraq. Hajjaj built a new city of Wasit, where he stationed his Syrian army in order to hold the Iraqis in check. Thus Kufa lost its former importance and Wasit became the headquarters of the governor of Iraq. In the long run, however, Hajjaj's measures against the people of Iraq created a gulf between them and their Umayyad rulers.

Conquests of Abdul Malik

North Africa. After the conquest of North Africa, Uqba bin Nafe ruled it for a long time. However in 684 A. D., the Berbers revolted against Arab rule, because the Arabs treated them as an inferior race. The Berber chief, named Kusayla, who had accepted Islam, was given a very menial position which he resented. He collected his Berbers tribes and revolted. The Greeks in Sicily joined hands with the Berbers and both declared war on Uqba. He reitreated from Qayrowan, but was defeated and killed in 685 A. D., in a battle near Mount Atlas. Kusayla occupied Qayrowan and most of the Arabs fled to Egypt. Thus the Arabs lost whole of Ifriqia, from Barqa to the Far West.

Abdul Malik sent a new commander, named Zuhair, against the Berbers in 688 A. D. He was one of Uqba's lieutenants. He defeated Kusayla and re-occupied Qayrowan, but was defeated and killed soon after. Though Abdul Malik was much perturbed by these reverses in North Africa, his hands were too full with troubles in Iraq and Arabia to send a new force against the Berbers. For

five years he did not send any new force against them.

Rise of "Kahina": In the meanwhile, Kusayla died. He was succeeded to the chieftanship of the Berbers by a woman-leader, whom the Arab historians called "Kahina", a sorceress. She exercised a mysterious influence over all the Berber tribes of North Africa from Sudan to Mount Atlas and gathered a large force against the Arabs. She too had the support of the Greeks.

At last, in 693 A. D., Abdul Malik sent a new commander, named Hassan bin Numan, against the Berbers. He re-captured Qayrowan and sacked Carthage, then inhabited by the Greeks. But later he had to fall back to Barqa before the Kahina. For another five years, Hassan remained inactive against her.

Re-conquest of North Africa. In spite of their victories, the Berbers were no match for the Arabs. So far as the weapons of war were concerned, both the contestant were equal. But the Berbers did not possess the organisation, discipline and above all the inspiration of faith of the Arabs. At last, in 698 A. D., the Caliph sent new reinforcements to Hassan, who inflicted a decisive defeat upon the Kahina. She was killed. Whole of North Africa again passed into the hands of the Arabs and was pacified. Hassan remained as the governor of Qayrowan till 709 A. D. when he was succeeded by Musa bin Nusayr.

Islamisation of the Berbers. After the defeat of the Kahina, the Berbers began to accept Islam in large numbers. Her own sons, with 12,000 men, submitted to Hassan and adopted Islam. Teachers were appointed in each tribe to convert it to Islam. So all Berbery became Muslim. The Arabs made the Berbers their Mawali, and recruited them in their armies, but did not treat them as their equal. In the long run, it led to unfortunate developments. For many fugitive Kharijis took shelter among the Berbers and spread their dissent and schism among them.

War with the Byzantines : 692-703. During the Civil War the Greeks had imposed a humiliating tribute upon Abdul Malik. When it ended, the Caliph renewed the war with the Greeks, in 692 A. D. The Greeks used to import papyrus from Egypt and paid the Muslims in their golden dinars. Hitherto, the papyrus had water-marks with words from Christian scriptures and a cross. But now Abdul Malik stamped it with words from the Quran, such as "Say there is One God". The Byzantine emperor rejected the papyrus and threatened that if the Quranic verses were not removed, he would imprint such words on the "dinars" which would hurt Muslim feelings. Thereupon Abdul Malik ordered the minting of the dinars and other coins in Damascus and other parts

of the Empire. A war broke out between the Greeks and the Arabs both in Armenia and in Syria. The Greeks captured Antioch, while the Arabs took Erzerum in Asia Minor. It lasted for several years with varying fortune. Its only results were strained relations between the Christians and the Muslims and sufferings for the inhabitants of the border regions.

REFORMS OF ABDUL MALIK

Beginnings of Arabian Civilisation. After the overthrow of Ibn Zubayr Muslim lands enjoyed a well-earned interval of repose and prosperity. It mitigated, though it could not undo, the frightful dissensions wrought by thirteen years of almost continuous civil war. During this time Abdul Malik introduced several reforms and changes. This period of comparative peace, which has been aptly called the "Glorious Age of the Umayyads", began from 692, in the reign of Abdul Malik, and lasted till 743 A. D., at the end of Hisham's reign. It was not only an era of conquests and expansion of the Muslim Empire, but also that of nationalizing or Arabicizing of the administration, the introduction of the first purely Arab coinage, the development of the postal service, and the introduction of Arabic as the official language of the Empire. These changes laid the foundation of the Islamic culture and civilisation of the Middle Ages. They were brought about by the reforms of Abdul Malik and, to a lessor extent, those of his viceroy of the East, Hajjaj bin Yusuf. Hitherto the Arabs were only the conquerors and rulers of the lands of Syria, Egypt, Iraq, etc., where the Byzantine and Sassanian influences and cultures still existed. But from the days of Abdul Malik onward the Islamic way of life and methods of administration began to grow and develop.

New Arabic Coinage. Greek and Persian coins were still in general use in the Muslim territories. Hazrat Umar and Ameer Muawiya had made faint attempts to introduce Arabic coins. But it was Abdul Malik who achieved success. As we have said above, he first struck purely Arabic coins in 695 A. D., when a mint was installed in Damascus, and a year later by Hajjaj in Kufa. The coins minted were the gold coin, called dinar, the silver coin, called dirham, and copper coin, called fals, copied from the Byzantine models. Their names were also borrowed from Greek. These coins bore Arabic inscriptions and were standardized both in weight and metal. The Muslim world was freed from its dependence upon foreign coinage.

Arabic as the official langnage. Since the conquests of Umar the Great, Muslim rulers continued to use the native languages in the conquered provinces for fiscal records, etc. Thus Greek was still in use in Egypt, and Syria, and old Persian in Kufa, Basra and

Persia. But Abdul Malik replaced them by Arabic which became the official language for financial administration. This change is said to have been suggested by a Persian Maula, named Sahlih bin Abdurrahman.

Reform of Arabic script. Arabic had now become both the religious and official language of the non-Arab peoples of the Empire. It became necessary to reform its script for the sake of its proper pronunciation and recitation, and to provide a sound basis for the interpretation of the Quran and the collection of Hadith. The writing of Arabic was then very defective. Arabic alphabet, as it then existed, consisted entirely of consonants. Several of these consonants resembled with each other, such as the Arabic letters "tey", "sey" and, 'jeem', 'khey' and 'hay', etc. They did not carry diacritical marks, now called "*nuqtahs*", to distinguish them from each other. Moreover, there were no vowel-signs to help the reader in the pronunciation of the words. To an Arab these defects did not matter much, but to a non-Arab they presented a real obstacle in properly pronouncing and reciting the holy text.

It was Hajjaj bin Yusuf, the enterprising governor of Iraq, himself a school-master in his early life, who undertook the work of reforming Arabic script. He invented the diacritical marks, the *nuqtahs*, and placed them on the identical letters to distinguish them from each other. He also borrowed the vowel-signs, *fathah* (zabar) *kasrah* (zeyr) and *dhammah* (pesh), from the Syriac language and placed them above or below the letters as required. This reform improved Arabic script as best as it could be for purposes for medieval learning and scholasticism. It also reveals the versatile genius of Hajjaj bin Yusuf, his love of poetry, literature and Arabic scripture.

Architecture. Abdul Malik and his energetic governor, Hajjaj bin Yusuf, were also great builders. In 691 Abdul Malik built in Jerusalem the magnificient Dome of the Rock, wrongly called by the Europeans "the Mosque of Umar". This is shown by the Kufic inscription on it, although the Abbaside Caliph Mamun endeavoured to pass it off as his own by effacing Abdul Malik's name and writing his name instead. But he neglected to rub off the date of construction 72 A. H./691 A. D. Abdul Malik also built the mosque in Jerusalem, called Masjid al-Aqsa. One reason of these sacred buildings was his attempt to make Jerusalem the "Qibla" of the Muslims. He intended thus to divert their eyes from Mecca which was then in the hands of his rival, Abdullah bin Zubayr. But Ibn Zubayr's defeat and death made him to give up his plan.

Wasit. During the rebellion of Ibn al-Ashath, which shock the

Umayyad rule in Iraq to its foundations, Kufa had virtually gone out of the hands of Hajjaj bin Yusuf. Partly to be away from turbulent Kufans, partly to hold them down by a Syrian army, stationed in the neighbourhood of Kufa, but mainly to occupy a strategic point in the heart of the rebellious province, Hajjaj built a new city, named Wasit. It was so named, for it lay in the centre of al-Iraq at an equal distance from Kufa, Basra, Ahwaz, Madain and later, Baghdad. It was founded in 702, and soon became the military and administrative centre of the Umayyad Iraq, and the head-quarters of the governors. Abdul Malik also re-organised the postal system, called al-Barid.

Development of Feudalism : Abdul Malik's reign is a turning-point in the history of the Arabs in general and of the Umayyads in particular. The most significant growth by the time of Abdul Malik was the evolution of the aristocratic feudalism among the Arabs. The population of the Umayyad Empire was still divided into two: the Muslims and the Dhimmis who were still in great majority. The Muslim population in cities and town was further divided into four classes: the big landlords, the lesser landlords, the Mawali and the slaves. Even before the rise of the Umayyads, Arabs began to acquire lands outside Arabia. From the time of Muawiya onwards the number of such Arab land-owners increased steadily. Estates were acquired in two ways—by purchase from non-Arab owners and by grant from the Arab government. Abdul Malik accelerated the process of state-grants of land to his relatives, supporters and dependents. The land thus granted was called Qata'i. The Arab landlord paid not Kharaj but Ushr or tithe for his estate. He usually lived in the city or town, where he was a warrior, while his land was cultivated by native tenants or semi-servile labour. Many of these non-Arab cultivators adopted Islam, and became the 'Mawali', and left their villages to settle in neighbouring towns, and cities.

Hajjaj's measures against the Iraqi Mawali. In the restless Province of Iraq, Hajjaj was confronted with a socio-economic problem of the Mawali, the native cultivators. They adopted Islam and left their villages and agriculture and migrated to neighbouring towns and cities, especially Kufa and Basra. There they added new dangers to the already precarious peace and order. Their flight also decreased the revenue from lands, which were left uncultivated. Hajjaj adopted a drastic measure against the fleeing cultivators. He forbade them to migrate from their villages, and forced them to return home who had done so, and branded the names of their villages upon their hands. These feudal measure, however, increased resentment against Hajjaj and swelled the numbers of the rebels and law-breakers in his province, which necessitated further oppressive measures and severities by Hajjaj.

Death of Abdul Malik. Abdul Malik died in 86 A. H./705 A. D. at the age of 60. He had nominated his son, Walid, as his successor.

Charactor of Abdul Malik. Like most other Umayyad Caliphs, the character of Abdul Malik has been blackened by the malignant pens of the Abbaside historians: "He was the first Caliph that resorted to treacherous execution, as in the case of Amr bin Said: the first to prohibit men from talking in the presence of the Caliph; the first to play the miser, the first to declare, as on the death of Ibn Zubayr, 'Let no one enjoin equity and fear of God upon me or I will strike his head off from his shoulders.'' Masudi says that his governors like Hajjaj, followed his example in the reckless shedding of blood. He was accused of impiety, as for example he shut the Quran when he first heard of his accession to the throne and said, "this is my farewell to thee". As Yaqubi puts it: with him and his soldiers and officials, "reverence and loyalty clashed, and loyalty conquered." Ameer Ali remarks : "Avarice and cruelty dominated his character."

On the whole, Abdul Malik's character was much better than it is painted. It must be remembered that he lived in a stormy age, and at the time of his accession he was confronted with powerful rivals and great dangers. The charge of cruetly is false, for, with but one exception of Amr bin Said, as Muir says, we do not find any act of bitterness and retaliation. On the contrary, before resorting to extremeties, he repeatedly made efforts of pardon and reconciliation. This is illustrated by his efforts to make peace with Musa'b before the battle with him. Similarly the charges of avarice and miserliness are also unfounded. Himself a lover of poetry, he liberally rewarded the poets attended his court. They were many, both Arab Muslims and Christians, like Jarir, and the Christian al-Akhtal. "Of niggardliness in any branch of the administration, no instance has been given", as Muir observes. He had only two faults, if faults they can be called. Though well-learned in Muslim theology, he was not a bigoted or narrow-minded theocrat. His attitude towards his caliphal office was secular. As Muir says, "his piety was a matter of policy." Caliphate was in his eyes a political and dynastic affair and not a spiritual duty. This reveals his second fault. His policy was guided only by considerations of personal rule and dynastic interests. Ameer Ali has aptly remarked, "Just, when justice was not opposed to dynastic interest; daring and energetic, resolute and ambitious, he never faltered in the pursuit of his designs." In character he resembled Charlemagne, but was more humane than him. His regin was characterised by a wise, mild and just administration. He no doubt employed Hajjaj, but kept him in strict check. He showed greater favouritism towards his Umayyad kinsmen than Muawiya, but they were able men. He

found a truncated empire and left it not only re-united but also strong and prosperous: "having triumphed over all his enemies," writes Muir, "he left to his sons a splendid inheritance, and with it the ample and ready means for extending the kingdom on every side."

His Place in History. Next to Muawiya, Abdul Malik is the greatest caliph of the Umayyad dynasty. In some respects, he and not Muawiya was the real founder of the Umayyad Caliphate. Muawiya was its founder in political and constitutional sense, while Abdul Malik was in the administrative sense. By his patient, wise and energetic statesmenship he reunited the empire and re-established Umayyad, rule when it had virtually vanished. By his reforms, he laid the foundations of Arabian culture and civilisation. He re-organised the administration by Arabicizing it, which enabled the Arabs to join finance and other departments. He was the first to open a mint in Islam. His reign was the beginning of the Glorious Age of the Umayyads, and the harbinger of the Golden Age of the Abbasides.

Chapter 39

UMAYYAD CALIPHATE AT ITS ZENITH

Al-Walid I : 705-715 A. D./86-96 A.H.

Accession of al-Walid. After the death of Abdul Malik, his son, al-Walid, ascended the throne peacefully. During his reign, the Umayyad dynsty reached the climax of its power and glory, both in brilliant military conquests abroad and in peace and prosperity at home. Though himself not a warrior, he had a galaxy of great generals whose brilliant victories and conquests shine like gems in the pages of Islamic History. Indeed, al-Walid's reign, after that of Umar I before him, was the second great period of Islamic expansion, which made the Islamic Empire one of the largest empires in World History. On his accession, Walid confirmed Hajjaj in the viceroyalty of Iraq and eastern provinces. But he dismissed the incompetent Hisham bin Ismael from the governorship of Hijaz and appointed his cousin, Umar bin Abdul Aziz, in his place.

Walid's Administrators: Umar bin Abdul Aziz. The appointment of Umar bin Abdul Aziz was a welcome change in Medina. Being a pious, mild and kind administrator, Umar revived the consultative system, the Shura, of his great namesake, Umar the second Orthodox Caliph. He consulted the citizens of Medina and Mecca in administrative matters. He also undertook the pious task of re-building and beautifying the Holy Cities, especially the Mosque of the Prophet. The old Mosque of mud walls was demolished and in its place a new and enlarged Mosque of marble and mosaics was constructed. He wrote to the Caliph who sent several camel-loads of Syrian and Byzantine mosaic and gifts of gold and silver for this pious undertaking. Walid even wrote to the Byzantine emperor who sent a hundred architects and presents of gold and dinars. The new Mosque of the Holy Prophet was symbolic of the socio-economic enrichment of the Muslims of the Umayyad period. Umar also undertook the construction of roads for the pilgrims. visiting the Holy Cities. He planted trees, dug wells or built water-tanks for them on their journey to and fro Hijaz.

But Umar's mild rule was not liked by Hajjaj bin Yusuf, because it was in strong contrast to his own severity. Many a man fled from Iraq to Medina to take refuge from Hajjaj's persecutions. He complained to the Caliph on several occasions, and requested him to recall Umar from Hijaz. At last, the Caliph transferred Umar to Egypt on Hajjaj's request, and appointed Khalid bin

Abdullah al-Qasri, a man of Hajjaj, in Umar's place.

Hajjaj bin Yusuf. As we have said above, Hajjaj bin Yusuf was a native of Taif, and a scion of the famous tribe of Thaqif, to which such other leading personalities of the Umayyads as Ziyad bin Sumayya, al-Mughira and al-Mukhtar also belonged. In his early youth, he was a school-master and preserved a life-long interest in Arabic language, literature and theology. He had a great mastery over Arabic and loved to express himself in forceful language and rhetoric. His speeches were long appreciated and commended by great scholars afterwards.

Iraq was a turbulent province under the Umayyads and became still more turbulent during the second Civil War. The Kharijis, the Shias, the Bedouin tribes and others were a constant source of revolt and disturbance for the Umayyad Caliphs. It was for these reasons that Abdul Malik's choice fell upon Hajjaj, whom he appointed as governor of Iraq in 695. He retained this office for about twenty years, till his death in 714.

Hajjaj's strict administration. Hajjaj's rule was often harsh and sometimes cruel, but his severity was justified by the fact that he ruled Iraq, especially Kufa and Basra, then full of fanaticism, rebellion and turbulence. He was by temperament a strong man, impatient of opposition, sedition and rebellion. He meted out a severe and harsh chastisement to them. As Ameer Ali says, "In the course of his long government over Iraq, he put to death nearly 150,000 men, many on false, charges, some of them the best of the Arab race. At the time of his death, 50,000 people of both sexes were found rotting in his prisons and cursing the tyrant." The stories of Hajjaj's severities must, however, be read with caution for they were derived from the pens of the Abbaside writers and historians. After twenty years of administration, he made this province a land of peace, prosperity and learning. By restoring peace to this troubled province, he opened a new chapter of great conquests in Central Asia and South Asian sub-contenent which would have never been possible if there were no peace in Iraq. Thus the festering wound of Iraq on the body politique of the Caliphate was healed for further expansion of its territories.

Other Achievements of Hajjaj. Besides administrative and military achievements, Hajjaj had several others to his credit, summarised as below :—

1. *Developm nt of Arab feudalism.* Like Caliph Walid and several other princes and personalities of the Umayyad Caliphate Hajjaj was a great landlord. When confronted with the danger of depopulation of the villages in Iraq due to the flight of the

native cultivators, he forced them to return to their villages. He branded names of their villages on their hands in order to prevent flight in future.

2. *Canals and other agricultural developments.* The feudal economy of Iraq depended upon its canal system, Hajjaj took great interest in digging new canals or re-digging old ones and in draining marshy lands in the lower regions of the Tigris and the Euphrates, especially near Basra. He introduced South Asian buffaloes in Iraq. Baladhuri writes that he even forbade the slaughter of the oxen in order to keep them for the plough. He improved coinage, measures and taxes.

3. *His learning.* Hajjaj was a man of learning. He wrote the Quran with his own hands and loved to distribute copies of its free among the people. He was a good orator and used to quote verses of Arabian poets in his speeches.

4. *Arabic script.* As we have said above, Hajjaj improved Arabic writing, which made the Arabic language the language not only of Islamic theology but also of science, philosophy and learning during the Middle Ages for all peoples, Arabs as well as non-Arabs.

5. *His administrative system : the "School of al-Hajjaj".* Hajjaj established a strong system of administration, based on the unlimited use of force and oppression by him and his officials or governors, which came to be known as the "School of al-Hajjaj". During his twenty years of administration Abdul Malık and after him al-Walid delegated all powers to him, including the right to appoint governors of the provinces under his control The governors and administrators of these provinces, old or newly conquered, were trained by Hajjaj in the ways of his strong administration. Muhammad bin Qasim, Qutayba ibn Muslim and Khalid al-Qasri are some examples of men trained in his "school".

6. *An Empire-Builder.* Al-Hajjaj was one of the greatest empire-builders in the history of the Arabs, as his conquests of Central Asia and Sind illustrate so clearly. His expansionist policies resulted from his pre-occupation to strengthen the Umayyad rule and authority in the provinces by means of strong administration. He thus tried to divert the energy and attention of the unruly Arab *muqatila* warriors and tribesmen into wars against the non-Muslims peoples and thereby expand the Empire by conquering new lands and territories. Nevertheless, his strong administrative and expansionist policies aroused bitter opposition both among the Umayyad ruling classes and the people, as for example by Umar

bin Abdul Aziz, a cousin of the Umayyad Caliph. This opposition produced the consequences which weakened the Umayyad rule, as we shall describe later.

Hajjaj's character : Hajjaj's character had been painted in the darkest colours by the Arab writers of the Abbaside period, and by some modern historians. Hitti says that he was usually described as a blood-thirsty tyrant, a veritable Nero. Besides his "ferocious cruelty", his gluttony and impiety were favourite themes with the historians. Sir William Muir, always ready to pen down every calumny against the personalities of early Islam, describes him as "one of the cruellest tyrants the world has ever seen," and adds, "Al-Hajjaj stands out in the annals of Islam as the incarnation of cruelty." Ameer Ali describes him as a man of "intolerable and ferocious cruelty, the effect of whose wholesale massacres was to attenuate the Saracenic nation by depriving it of its noblest and most capable leaders." But there was some justification for his severity. Hajjaj ruled a province where all respect for law, morals and religion had vanished, where fanaticism reigned supreme and where sedition and rebellion were rampant. He was, indeed, impetuous and even impatient with those who took the law into their own hands and disobeyed his orders. But he was not cruel, or merciless. Wellhausen has rightly remarked : "His iron hand was covered with no velvet glove, nor had he any winning ways of coversation. He was harsh, at times hard, but not cruel ; neither was he petty and bigoted." He was not superstitious, like most of his contemporaries. When a thunder-storm burst over Mecca at the time of the siege, his soldiers attributted it to God's anger, but he allayed their fears by explaining it as the salute of the Heaven promising victory. He was mild and merciful in nature. When a notable rebel confessed truth, he pardoned him. When he first arrived in Kufa and Basra, he granted general pardon to those who gave up evil ways. Unlike Yezid's army in Medina, Hajjaj's victory over Mecca after Ibn Zubayr's death or over Kufa after Ibn al-Ashath's rebellion did not lead to the sack or massacre in these cities at the hands of the victorious Syrians. To conclude in Wellhausen's words: "Living and dying, he had a clear conscience."

Comparison with Ziyad : Their place in Umayyad History. Ziyad and Hajjaj were the two great viceroys of Iraq under the Umayyads, much envied by their rivals, the Abbasides. For this there were some reasons. Both of them served their masters with great administrative skill and ability, and saved the Umayyad rule from rebellion and possible destruction at the hands of its numerous political and religious enemies. They did not hold a fat sinecure but performed really tough administrative task. For this reason, they earned, as Wellhausen says, "the confidence of their lords,

who gave them great power which they retained as long as they lived, without troubling about the favour or reproach of public opinion." Umayyad Caliphs were interested only in keeping peace and order and collecting taxes, for which purpose they delegated full powers to their administrators. Both Ziyad and Hajjaj were the best examples of this type of administration. They regarded themselves as the representatives of the Central Government and not of the people over whom they were appointed. Both belonged to the famous tribe of Thaqif of Taif, with whom the Umayyads had relations even in pre-Islamic times. Both proved themselves as the pillars of their Caliphate.

Nevertheless, Ziyad and Hajjaj differed from each other in many ways. Although as administrators, both were equally firm and severe, but Hajjaj resorted to greater severity and harsher measures than Ziyad. Among other reasons, this was also due to the changes in Iraq since Ziyad's days. Hajjaj had to deal with a restless province which had passed through two decades of civil commotion, rebellion and indiscipline. He had therefore to face a tougher task than Ziyad. Their methods also differed. Ziyad was a princely administrator who relied upon 'durbars' and royal conversations to influence the leaders in Kufa and Basra to peaceful ways. He played one clan against the other, and relied upon the Azd tribe to hold down the rest. He himself declared that he did not care how much the people hated him but would leave them in peace so long as they would not do evil or break the law. Hajjaj relied upon the Caliph and the Syrian troops to suppress troubles in Kufa. He stationed the Syrians as an army of occupation at Wasit, a town built by Hajjaj specially for this purpose. In spite of this Hajjaj was not inferior to Ziyad. Even after his death, his rule affected the politics of the Umayyads, for the people were even then counted for or against him. As a man, he was a learned scholar and was interested in agriculture, coinage and other aspects of administration. He had the gift of oratory and loved to embellish his speeches with elegant words and verses. Lastly, as an empire-builder he was far superior to Ziyad. Ziyad's generals could reach only upto Kabul and Kirman, but Hajjaj's conquered lands right upto Kashgar and Multan. Indeed, Hajjaj might well be regarded as one of the earliest founders of Pakistan: he was the man who introduced Islam into South Asian sub-continent.

Conquests under Al-Walid

Conquests in the East. During al-Walid's reign, Muslim Empire expanded both in the East and in the West, in Asia and in Europe. In the East, the expansion was the work of Hajjaj bin Yusuf. He sent armies for the conquest of Central Asia, and Sindh.

(*i*) **Conquest of Central Asia : 705-715 A. D.** At the time of al-Walid's accession Umayyad Empire extended upto the province of Khorasan. Beyond this province, across the river Oxus lay the lands of the Turkomans, Khazars, the Sughds and other Turkish tribes in Central Asia, called Transoxiana by the Greeks or Mavar un-Nahr by the Arabs, for it lies across the Oxus. It was also called Sughdiana, after the Sughds of Bukhara, Transoxiana was however, divided into several kingdoms, tribes and independent cities like Bukhara, Samarqand, Shash (Tashkent), etc. The people were mostly Buddhists and Magians or fire-worshippers. The cities of Central Asia were renowned for their riches and prosperity, for they were situated on the great international trade route between China and Western Asia and Europe. For centuries large quantities of Chinese products, such as silk, were carried across this route. Consequently these cities became centres of flourishing trade and commerce, inhabited by rich merchants and traders. Their riches attracted the Arabs like a magnet. Unsuccessful attempts at their conquest were made in the days of Muawiya by Ziyad's sons and commanders. But where they failed, Hajjaj succeeded.

Qutayba bin Muslim : the conqueror of Central Asia. Soon after Walid's accession, Hajjaj dismissed Yezid bin Muhallab from the governorship of Khorasan and appointed Qutayba bin Muslim in his stead. Qutayba belonged to the Bahila, a weak and neutral tribe. On the instruction of Hajjaj, Qutayba undertook the permanent conquest of Central Asia. His plan of war was that he made Merv the capital of Khurasan, instead of Nishapur. From there as his base he led an expedition into different parts of Central Asia during summer. In winter he returned to Merv, after leaving a necessary force in the conquered cities.

Capture of Balkh in 705. To the south of the Oxus lay the city of Balkh, which was the capital of Tukharistan, a little principality. Balkh was captured by Qutayba in 705, when the Prince of Balkh made a treaty with the Arabs. Next year, in 706, Qutayba advanced towards Paykand, a market-town near Bukhara, just north of the Oxus, which was captured after a stiff resistance.

Conquest of Bukhara 707-9. In 707, Qutayba attacked the most important city in Sughdiana, namely Bukhara. The Prince of Bukhara sought the help of the Turkomans of neighbouring territories. The Sughdians resisted the Arabs stoutly for three years. At last, the city fell into Arabs' hands in 709. Banu Tamim showed great feats of bravery in this war. The Arabs built a mosque in the city and laid an Arab quarter in it,—a thing done for the first time by them beyond the Oxus. During this long struggle, a revolt occurred in Tukharistan, led by the King of

Tukharistan and his minister. It was suppressed after a battle near Khulm.

During 709 to 711, Qutayba marched against Zunbil, the King of Sistan. In 712, he again crossed the Oxus and marched on Khawarizm, whose King submitted to the Arabs without resistance. Qutayba settled an Arab colony there.

Capture of Samarkand. The Sughdians once again revolted. Qutayba attacked them in full force and captured Samarkand. Here the fire-temples were demolished, a mosque was built and a Muslim quarter was laid in the city.

Qutayba's last Campaign. In 714, Qutayba pushed his conquests into the regions of Ferghana, where Khojanda and Shash were conquered. Next year in 715, Qutayba advanced against the Kashgar province of the Chinese Empire, where, according to Arab historians, he received the submission of the "emperor of China". In the mean-while, al-Walid had died. His successor, Sulaiman, was a mortal enemy of Hajjaj and his relatives and generals. Fearing death at the hands of the new Caliph, Qutayba revolted against him. But the Arab tribes refused to join his desperate revolt and deserted him for the royal force. Qutayba was killed shortly after in 716. He was one of the greatest heroes of Islam to die at the hands of Caliph Sulaiman.

Review of the Conquest of Central Asia : The conquest of Central Asia was a brilliant example of the expansionist policy of the Umayyad Caliphs, and, particularly, of al-Hajjaj, the governor-general of the East. It was, indeed, a result of the Umayyad policy of diverting the attention and energy of the Arab *muqatila* tribesmen from inter-tribal disputes and quarrels to wars and conquests of foreign lands and peoples. The more the Umayyad rulers kept these tribesmen under firm and strict administration, the more they were induced or inclined to join the Muslim armies fighting on the borders of the Caliphate. The conquest of Central Asia, however, revealed some weaknesses in this policy of war and expansion. Khurasan, from where the campaigns against Central Asian cities and peoples were launched, was a frontier province where quite different conditions prevailed as compared to the interior provinces, like Iraq or Syria. Firstly, the Arab tribes settled or stationed in Khurasan became disappointed with the Umayyad administrative policy of favouring one or the other important group among them, sometimes the Tamim (Mudar) group and at other times their opponents, the Rabi'a or Yemenite group.

Moreover, a change was coming over some of the Arab tribes long settled in this province. They had taken to trade and com-

merce, dealing both with the local Iranian population and with the merchants and traders of the cities of Central Asia. The Umayyad policy of war and conquest injured their trade relations with the Sughdians and others. Lastly, another weakness in the expansionist policy lay in Hajjaj's inability to win the whole-hearted support of the Persian converts or Mawali of Khurasan. He encouraged them to join the Arab armies in order to counter-balance the unruly Arab tribesmen. But he did not try to assimilate the Mawali into the Arab community fully, by treating them as the equals of the Arabs. For instance, he did not give them (*i*) an equal share in the war-booty or *ghanima* and (*ii*) an equal share in the *ata*' or pension of the Diwan. Qutayba went to the extext of neglecting their interests, as they complained when he invited them to join in his revolt against the new Caliph Sulaiman. Qutayba even tried to prevent any assimilation of the Mawali and Arabs into a single community. He kept the Mawali in a separate division in his army,instead of allowing them to join the Arab tribes or clans whose clients they were supposed to be. Thus the seeds of subsequent opposition and revolt against the Umayyad Rule were sown in the days of al-Hajjaj in the frontier province of Khurasan.

Conquest of Sind : 711-15 A. D. The second great conquest under Hajjaj was that of Sind. Raja Dahir, the ruler of Debal, ill-treated the Muslims who fell into his hands. Hajjaj sent an expedition against him to chastise him, but he defeated it. Thereupon Hajjaj sent a new army under the command of Muhammad bin Qasim, his youthful cousin and governor of Mekran. It included 6000 Syrian horsemen and 6000 camel-riders of Iraq, along with three catapults. Muhammad bin Qasim captured Debal after some resistance by Raja Dahir, who fled to Brahmanabad, where he was at last killed in a battle. Muhammad bin Qasim continued his victorious advance along the river Indus. He captured Ror and crossed the river for Multan, which he captured in 715. At this time, Sulaiman became the Caliph. The youthful general was delivered by the Caliph over to his mortal enemy, the governor of Iraq who succeeded Hajjaj. He was tortured to death. Nevertheless, Hajjaj and Muhammad bin Qasim had succeeded in introducing Islam into the sub-continent of Indo-Pakistan. Sind became a province of the caliphate and remained so for about a century. The Arab administration of Sind was tolerant. Brahmanabad remained the headquarters of the Arab governor, but it was later shifted to Mahfuza, a city inhabited by the Arab settlers.

Expansion in the West. In 708, al-Walid appointed Musa bin Nusayr, a Yemenite Arab, as the governor of Qayrowan, to succeed Hasan bin Noman. Believing him to be weak, the Berbers again revolted, with the aid of the Greeks. But Musa crushed their

rebellion after a short campaign. Thus he re-established his control over the whole of North Africa upto the bounds of Morocco. He also sent naval expedition against the Greek possessions in the Mediterranean and captured the islands of Majorca, Minorca and Sardinia, where Arab culture soon began to flourish.

Conquest of Spain : 711-14 A.D. Musa's greatest achievement was the conquest of Spain. On the eve of Arab conquest, Spain was a Gothic kingdom, ruled by Roderic, a usurper. The Gothic kings and their feudal nobles had fastened a grinding yoke upon their serfs and slaves who belonged to the old Iberian population of Spain. The privileged classes of nobles and Roman Catholic clergy paid no taxes, the burden of which fell heavily upon the middle class, the merchants and shopkeepers. The land was cultivated by the serfs, tied to the soil, or by the miserable herds of slaves who worked under the pitiless lashes of cruel overseers. Ameer Ali says: "Serfs or slaves, for them there was no hope of freedom or gleam of sunshine on this side of the grave." The Jews, who settled in Spain in great numbers, also suffered terribly from the persecutions of the clergy and the kings. Defeated in a recent revolt, they were forcibly converted to Christianity by the Roman Catholic clergy. So the Jews, the merchants, the serfs and slaves welcomed the Arabs as liberators who set them free from both the king, the nobles and the clergy. Arab conquest was to them at once a political, religious and an economic emancipation.

Causes. The King of Spain, Roderic, was a usurper and a tyrant. He had deposed the legitimate king, named Witiza and had murdered him. Moreover, he ill-treated Florinda, the daughter of Count Julian, the governor of Ceuta (Tangiers) and Algeciras, the southern province of Spain. The infuriated father resolved to avenge his daughter's wrong. He approached Musa, the governor of Qayrowan, with the suggestion to invade the Gothic kingdom and liberate it from the usurper's yoke. Musa sought the permission of the Caliph Walid for invading Spain. The Caliph was at first reluctant to send his troops across the sea into the unknown land, but at last he consented to his governor's request.

Events. Musa first sent one of his young and enterprising officer, named Tarif, with a small force to reconnaitre South Spain. After a few months, Tarif reported that favourable conditions for an invasion existed in Spain.

Tariq invades Spain : April, 711-714. After the favourable report of Tarif, Musa raised an army of nearly 7,000 men, consisting mostly of Berber freedmen (Mawali) along with some Arabs. He placed it under the command of Tariq bin Ziyad, who was probably a Berber and a Maula (freed slave) of Musa. Tariq crossed the

straits and took possession of the fortress on the south Spanish coast, built on a rock which came to be known after him as Jabal al-Tariq, now anglicised as Gibralter. Then he advanced into Algeciras, the southern province of Spain, with the aid and guidance of Count Julian.

Battle of Medina Sidonia. On hearing of the Arab landing in the south, Roderic at once marched thither. He summoned his feudal vassals to send troops to fight under his banner and thus collected a huge army of nearly 1,00,000 soldiers. In the meanwhile, Musa had sent 5,000 troops more to Tariq who thus commanded now 12,000 men. The battle between Tariq and Roderic took place near Medina Sidonia on the banks of the river Guadalete in September 711 A. D. When the battle began, the sons of Witiza deserted Roderic. After a fierce fighting, the Gathic army was routed. Roderic was drowned in the river while crossing it. Tariq next took the city of Ecija. These initial successes broke down the morale of the Spaniards, and enabled the Arabs to advance swiftly into the Peninsula.

Tariq now divided his army into four parts and despatched each into four different directions. One force captured Malaga, the other took Granada, the third besieged Cardova, while the fourth under Tariq himself pressed North towards the Gothic capital, Toledo. Tariq advanced upon Toledo with lightning speed which spread dismay among the Gothic commanders and warriors. In March. 712, he captured Toledo without fighting for it was deserted by the Spaniards. The Jew and other oppressed people in all cities welcomed the Arabs as deliverers from Gothic tyranny and Church persecution.

Musa also invades Spain : June, 712. In the meanwhile, Musa grew jealous of the splendid exploits of his own lieutenant and resolved to share in his glory. He landed with a large force in South Spain at Tarifa and advanced towards Seville, the ancient capital. He swiftly captured Seville, Carmona and other cities and met Tariq at Talavera, near Toledo. At first both quarrelled over the distribution of the booty but soon patched up their quarrel and turned their attention towards the complete subjugation of Spain. They moved into opposite directions. Musa conquered Salamanca, while Tariq besieged Saragossa, which did not fall till Musa joined Tariq in its capture. Then they together captured Taragona, Barcelona and finally Gerona in the Pyrenees on the French frontier. Though they conquered nearly whole of the Peninsula, nevertheless, its north-western corner, a mountainous region on the Atlantic coast called Asturias was never subdued by them, nor by anyone of their successors afterwards. The victorious Arab general, Musa had now the plan to invade France and sweep over Europe, which

would have been a far greater achievement than the conquest of Spain. But the Caliph at Damascus could not properly visualise the significance of his general's victories. He recalled him before he could execute his plan.

Recall of Musa and Tariq : 714. Caliph Walid ordered Musa to come to Damascus and to give an account of the war spoils he had captured. Reluctantly Musa left Spain along with Tariq. He made his eldest son, Abdul Aziz, the governor of the newly conquered province of Spain, while he appointed his second son, Abdul Malik, the governor of Qayrowan and his third son, Abdul Saleh, the commander of the fleet at Tangiers (Ceuta). He carried huge war-booty, including thousands of men and women as war-slaves, and travelled leisurely to Damascus. Before his arrival, Walid was dead. He successor, Sulaiman, received Musa and Tariq coolly and soon disgraced them and threw them into a dungeon. After Sulaiman's death, Musa and Tariq were seen in the streets of Damascus as beggars and died in obscurity. Musa's sons were already dismissed and poisoned by the secret orders of Sulaiman. The Umayyad Caliphs thus rewarded their great generals for all their victories.

Consequences of the Arab Conquest. The conquest of Spain by the Arabs opened a new and brilliant era in the history of the Peninsula. It put an end to the tyranny and exploitation of the Gothic nobles and churchmen. Serfdom was abolished. Jews enjoyed freedom of worship and property, denied to them by their Christian masters. A reign of peace, justice, prosperity and toleration began in the country. All oppressive and excessive taxes of the Gothic rulers were abolished, for the Arabs imposed only two taxes, the Jizya and the Kharaj. This lightened the burden of the people. Agriculture and trade began to flourish and prosperity returned to the land. Many former serfs and slaves adopted Islam. The Christians and their Church enjoyed full religious freedom. In course of time, Arab Spain became the most advanced centre of arts and learning, science and knowledge in Europe, for several centuries to come.

Administration of Spain. During the Umayyad Caliphate, Spain was divided into four provinces of Andalusia in the south, Toledo in the centre, Galacia in the west and Barcelona in the east. Later, the fifth province in France was added, when the Arabs conquered a part of South France, adjacent to the Pyrenees. Abdul Aziz, the son of Musa, was the first governor of Spain. He appointed a council for adopting the Islamic laws and institutions for the requirements of the country and for promoting the fusion of the Arab and Berber settlers in Spain. By his mild and beneficient government, he reconciled all tribes and classes to the new administration.

Settlement of Spain. A large number of Arab and Berber tribes settled in Spain during and after the conquest. They preferred to live in cities. Here they grouped themselves according to their tribal affinities. Thus they preserved their tribal differences, which led to the revival of their tribal jealousies in subsequent times. Indeed, the Arabs could never rise above their narrow tribal relations and rivalries. In Spain as in Khurasan at the other end of the Umayyad Caliphate, their inter-tribal quarrels were pregnant with far-reaching consequences. In Spain, the tribal rivalry was a four-cornered struggle between the Arab tribes of the North and South, the Modar and the Himyar, between the Arabs and the Berbers, between both Arabs and Berbers, on one side and the Spanish Muslims, called the Biladiun, on the other, and finally between the Muslims and the Christians, especially of the unsubdued Asturias. The Christians of Asturias, led by their chiefs, kept up a perpetual war on the settled regions of Muslim Spain for several centuries. They took full advantage of the internal quarrels and dissensions of the Muslims and at last in the fourteenth century drove them out of the Peninsula bag and baggage.

Navy under al-Walid. Walid's reign witnessed the naval supremacy of the Arabs on the Mediteranean. It enabled them to conquer Majorca and other Islands in it, and to advance into Spain and France. The navy was now well organised. It was divided into five squadrons, each stationed in Syria, Tunis Alexandria and the Nile. The naval ships were manned by sailors who were mostly Mawali and by the marines who were usually the Quraysh and Ansar. Yearly naval expeditions were sent against the Greeks.

Death of Walid. After a glorious reign of about ten years, al-Walid died in February, 715, at Dair-Marran.

Achievements of al-Walid. The reign of Walid I has been described by Sir Wiliam Muir as the most glorious in the annals of Islam. "From the borders of China and the banks of the Indus to the Altantic, his word was law."

Architecture. Although the main interest of Walid was in the brilliant conquests and great territorial expansion, yet in his reign culture and arts also began to flourish. Like Shah Jahan, he was a great builder. He rebuilt and enlarged the central Mosque at Damascus, the Mosque of the Holy Prophet in Medina and the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Under his directions, mosques were built in those cities of the empire which had none before. Forts were built along the frontier and roads with wells along them were constructed throughout the empire. Hospitals, schools, poor houses and asylums for the blind, the crippled, the poor and the insane

were established. Orphanages were set up for the education of the poor orphans. The Caliph himself visited the markets in order to regulate the rise and fall in prices.

Al-Walid was the first Caliph who could not speak Arabic correctly, although his father had warned him that to rule the Arabs "one must be proficient in their langauge". However he patronised literature and arts. His reign indeed was one of unbroken peace and progress and prosperity at home.

Character of al-Walid. Arab historians, like Masudi and Ibn al-Athir, regard Walid as a despot and tyrant, for he supported men like Hajjaj. But, as Weil says, "he is in our eyes the greatest, and in every respect the most powerful and illustrious, ruler amongst all the Commanders of the Faithful." "He was," says Ameer Ali, "more humane than his father Abdul Malik or his grand-father Merwan." His solicitude for the helpless and the distressed is shown by orphanages, asylums and poor houses he constructed, and the roads and wells he built for the comfort of the pilgrims. He was mild and considerate. As regards his conquests, "there is no other reign, not expecting even that of Omar, in which Islam so spread abroad and was consolitated." In short. "the era of al-Walid was glorious both at home and abroad," as Muir writes. "Looking at it from first to last, we shall not find in the annals of the Caliphate a more glorious reign than that of Al-Walid."

His tribal policy. Like Muawiya and Abdul Malik, Walid followed the wise policy of balance and equal treatment of the rival Arab tribes, and thus kept in check their rivalry.

Sulaiman. 715-717/96-99 A. H.

Accession of Sulaiman. Abdul Malik had nominated his sons, Walid, Sulaiman and Yezid to succeed one after the other. However Walid toyed with the idea of removing Salaiman's name from succession and nominating his own son instead. In this he was supported by Hajjaj, and his adherents, like Qutayba. No change was however, made till his last day. So Sulaiman ascended the throne, according to his father's wish, yet full of bitter resentment against those who had encouraged Walid in his desire to make a change. This resentment was expressed against Hajjaj and his relatives and friends. It influenced Sulaiman's character and policy and, thereby the subsequent history of the Umayyad rule.

Sulaiman's character and policy. Sulaiman's character has been described as a mixture of contradictions. On the one hand, he was a dissolute, cruel and worthless caliph, but on the other, he was generous and bluff. He was fond of pleasure and good cheer,

yet he preferred justice and was willing to listen to the wise and humane counsels of his cousin, Umar bin Abdul Aziz. On the one hand, he was a libertine who indulged in the pleasures of the 'harim' and was surrounded by slave-girls. Frequent marriages and divorces were the common talk in his court. On the other hand, he patronised the pious divines who frequented his court. "His sensuality", as Wellhausen writes, "did not prevent him from having leanings towards the pious." Immediately upon accession, he opened the doors of Hajjaj's prisons in Iraq and set at liberty thousands of men and women incarcerated by Hajjaj. He dismissed his tax-collectors and relieved the people of Iraq from the excessive taxes of Hajjaj. At the same time his vindictiveness made him to persecute mercilessly the relatives and supporters of Hajjaj and put to death such famous men as Mohammad bin Qasim and Qutayba bin Muslim, and even ill-treated Musa and Tariq.

Sulaiman endeavoured to reverse the policies of his Umayyad predecessors. He tried to win the favour of the Iraqis by dismissing Hajjaj's men from the administration of Iraq and by abolishing the heavy taxes imposed by him. He hobnobbed with the Alides and befriended a grandson of Amr bin Hazm, who had played a leading role in Uthman's murder. Above all, he was inclined to favour the Himyarites, which bore tragic consequences in later history of the Umayyad Caliphate.

Sulaiman and Yezid bin Muhallab. Sulaiman had conceived a bitter hatred of Hajjaj. It was partly because of his severe administration and his ill-treatment of Yezid bin Muhallab, but mainly because Hajjaj and his friends had supported Walid in his design to nominate his own son as his successor instead of Sulaiman. Hajjaj had dismissed Muhallab's sons from their posts for their Yemani leanings. He arrested and cruelly tortured them on charge of embezzlement. Yezid, the eldest of Muhallab's sons, managed to escape from his torturers' hands and took refuge with Sulaiman in Palestine, where he stayed during Walid's reign. Sulaiman interceded with his brother, Caliph Walid, on behalf of Yezid and got Caliph's permission to keep Yezid with him safe from Hajjaj. Yezid filled Sulaiman's ears against Hajjaj, and got his chance to wreak vengeance on his enemies when Sulaiman became Caliph. Hajjaj had predeceased Walid and was therefore safe from Sulaiman's vengeance, but his hand fell heavily on his nominees and kinsmen. They were removed from their positions of command. Muhammad bin Qasim, the conqueror of Sind and Hajjaj's son-in-law, was cruelly tortured to death by the Governor of Iraq. Qutayba, the conqueror of Transoxiana, revolted against the Caliph in despair and was defeated and killed by the royal force sent against him in Central Asia. Khalid bin Abdullah al-Qasri was deposed from Mecca where he was the governor. The lands and

properties of Hajjaj's relatives in Iraq, including those of Hajjaj's niece who was the wife of Sulaiman's brother, Yezid, were confiscated by the new Governor of Iraq. The persecutions of Hajjaj's family and officials appeared as the persecution of the Modarite party of the Arab tribes, especially as Yezid bin Muhallab belonged to the Azd tribe, a Yemani tribe. With him the Yemanites had come into power. Thus Sulaiman's vindictive nature kindled the pre-Islamic tribal jealousies. But it was only a beginning. Sulaiman himself was not fully aware of its long-term effects, nor he intended to do so. This is shown by two facts. He persecuted Musa and Tariq as vindictively as he did Hajjaj's kinsmen, although Musa was a Yemanite. Moreover, Sulaiman favoured Yezid bin Muhallab out of his bitter hatred for Hajjaj and not out of any tribal affinity with him. Sulaiman's mother was a Qaysite (Modarite) from Abs tribe. Nevertheless, by his revengeful short-sightedness, Sulaiman incited the tribal rivalry and hatred which divided the Modar and the Himyar tribes more and more in the subsequent period of the Umayyad history.

Yezid's campaign in Central Asia. Sulaiman's favourite, Yezid bin Muhallab, was appointed to the governorship of Iraq. But he soon got himself transferred to Khurasan where he promised the Caliph to bring renown by more brilliant victories and conquests than Qutayba's. On becoming governor, Yezid undertook a campaign against the rulers and tribes of Jurjan, and Tabaristan, situated along the Caspain Sea. The people of Jurjan surrendered without much fighting. Yezid then advanced against the ruler of Tabaristan, a mountainous region, into which he penetrated heedlessly. His army was forced to fall back without much success. Jurjan revolted in his rear, but Yezid marched against the ill-fated city and sacked it. Some war-booty was captured in this campaign. Yezid magnified its amount in his letters to Sulaiman in order to justify his boasts. He wrote that his campaigns had brought to the royal treasury sixty lakh dirhams as the Khums, but did not actually give a single dirham. Umar bin Abdul Aziz later took him to task for it.

Sulaiman and Spain. Sulaiman treated Musa and Tariq with disgrace. They were allowed to die in poverty and obscurity. But, still worse, Sulaiman got Musa's son, Abdul Aziz, murdered by poison. Abdul Aziz was left by his father as the governor at Seville. His administration of Spain was both successful and prosperous. But after his death confusion reigned in Spain, which enabled the Christians of Asturias to seize certain mountainous regions in the north. After Abdul Aziz's murder, the governor of Qayrown appointed al-Hurr, a Modarite, as the deputy-governor of Spain. He brought several hundred Arab families with him and settled them in the new province. Al-Hurr restored

peace and strength to it and made some military conquests in the north.

Sind. After Muhammad bin Qasim's recall, Sulaiman appointed a son of Muhallab, named Habib bin Muhallab, as the governor of Sind. Though brave, Habib was incapable of making any advance beyond Sind.

Attack on Constantinople : August 716—September 717. During Sulaiman's reign, the Arabs made the third attempt at the conquest of Constantinople. Indeed, Walid intended to send a naval expedition against the Byzantine capital. Sulaiman was induced to invade Constantinople by a Greek commander, named Leo the Isaurian. He was a Byzantine general. He offered to help the Arabs in the conquest of Constantinople. Sulaiman, dazzled by the prospects of new brilliant conquest, accepted his offer and sent his brother, Maslamah, with an army against the Byzantine capital. A fleet supported the army which laid siege to the capital. The siege lasted for a long time. At one time the Greeks were pressed hard and were willing to conclude peace with the Arabs. At this juncture, the Greek emperor Theodosius III died and the Greeks elected Leo the Isaurian as their emperor. He secretly deserted Muslim camp and entered Constantinople. This put a new spirit in the Greek resistance. Leo was aware of the weaknesses of the Arabs and defended his capital stoutly against them. Sulaiman's love of pleasure and indolence prevented him from sending reinforcements to the besiegers. As usual, frost, pestilence, famine and Greek fire took a heavy toll of Arab lives. The fleet was forced to retire. After Sulaiman's death, his successor, Umar II, recalled Maslamah's army from Constantinople.

Thus ended the third and the last attempt of the Arabs to conquer the Byzantine capital. Its failure placed a heavy burden upon the finances of the Umayyad caliphate. The causes of the Arab failure were more or less the same as before ; *viz.*, strong defence of the city, long line of supply from Syria, severe winter and frost, pestilence, and famine among the invading troops and the Greek fire. But a few new factors also prevented Arab victory. They were the indolence and sensuality of Caliph Sulaiman, the pacifism of his successor, Umar II, the skill and cunning of Leo the Isaurian, and the advent of the Bulgars who defended Constantinople against Arab invaders. Thus, as Hitti remarks, "The Syrian founder of the Isaurian dynasty of Byzantine emperors was hailed the saviour of Europe from the Arab Moslems as Heraclius, the Armenian founder of the Heraclean dynasty, had before him been declared the deliverer of Christendom from heathen Persia." Indeed. Christian Europe had escaped from a mighty two-pronged invasion and conquest by Islam from Spain

and the Balkans, first by Walid's recall of Musa and later by the indolent short-sightedness of Sulaiman.

Death of Sulaiman : September, 717. Sulaiman died at the military camp at Dabik in September, 717 A. D. He intended to nominate one of his sons as his successor. But Raj'a bin Haya, a divine in the Caliph's court who had great influence on him, pursuaded the dying Caliph to nominate his pious cousin, Umar, as his successor, with Yezid bin Abdul Malik as the next successor. For this Sulaiman earned a grateful title from the later divines (Ulema) as "*Mifiha al Khayr*"—the Key of Blessing.

Sex and State in Medieval Islam: In spite of Umar's nomination, Sulaiman deserves no praise. He was sensual, cruel, vindictive, dissolute, jealous and indolent. He killed the great generals who had brought renown and glory to the Umayyad caliphate. He was careless of administration and ruled through his worthless, pleasure-loving favourites like Yezid bin Muhallab. He indulged in the pleasures of the 'harim' and neglected his duties and responsibilities towards the armies fighting in distant lands.

However the failures of Sulaiman were, in the last analysis, due to the two shortcomings in the Islamic polity and society, which now became operative in the history of Islam, *viz*., polygamy and lack of constitutional principle of succession to the throne. So long as the caliphate was an elective institution, it did not matter much how many wives and sons a reigning caliph had. But when Muawiya transformed it into a hereditary kingship, the marriage of a caliph could not but affect the fortunes of the state. Indeed, the health and vigour of the empire depended upon the sex life of the caliphs. Sulaiman's indulgence in the pleasures of the 'harim', his frequent marriages and divorces became the direct causes of the growing weakness and inefficiency, of the central administration of the vast empire of the Umayyads, which extended over three continents from Sind to Spain. Had monogamy prevailed among the early Muslims, the law of primogeniture in dynastic succession and greater devotion to the business of the state would have been the natural growth in the medieval kingdoms and empires of Islam.

CHAPTER 40

UMAR II AND THE ORTHODOX ATAVISM

717-720 A. D./99-101 A. H.

His character. On the death of Sulaiman, his cousin, Umar bin Abdul Aziz, ascended the throne in accordance with Sulaiman's will. Umar was the son of Abdul Aziz, a brother of Abdul Malik. On his mother's side, he was a great-great grandson of Hazrat Umar, a descent of which he always took great pride. Partly because of this descent, but mainly because of his birth and long sojourn in Medina during his early life and youth among the divines and theologians of Medina, Umar bin Abdul Aziz was deeply imbued with the spirit of early Islam, particularly of his namesake, Umar I, for which reason he came to be known as Umar II. He was pious, even saintly, moderate, simple, just, peaceful and upright. Although brought up as a prince he renounced princely luxuries and ostentatiousness when he became Caliph and lived an unaffected and simple life on the daily stipend of two dirhams, the share of the Caliph in the strict law of early Islam. His very first act as a royal caliph was to sell the horses of the royal stable and put the proceeds in the Bayt-al Mal, for they were purchased by his ostentatious predecessors from the public treasury. He asked his wife to return the jewels given to her by her brother, Sulaiman, to the Bayt-al Mal, to which they originally belonged. The court life also reflected the change. According to Muir : "It went as a saying at Damascus that Al-Walid's turn was for art ; Sulaiman's for the harim and good living ; Omar's for devotion. The fashion of the Court changed accordingly. With the first, the talk was of culture; with the second, of slave-girls, marriage and divorce ; with the third, of austerity, and recitation of the Koran by night."

His administrative and financial problems. The coming to power of such a pious, just and peaceful Caliph had a great effect on the administrative and financial system of the Umayyad Caliphate. Though an Umayyad, Umar II was quite different from his Umyyad predecessors, and also from his successors as well. He might well be regarded as an exception to the un-Islamic, luxury-loving and unjust caliphs of the Umayyad dynasty. He differed from them in his personal character and conduct and also in his administrative and financial policies.

In fact, the Umayyad administrative and financial system,

which Muawiya, Abdul Malik and Hajjaj had built up, was in a state of crisis. It was based upon the rule of the Arabs over the non-Arabs, Muslims as well as non-Muslims, who were subjected to heavy financial burdens of Jizya, Kharaj and other imposts. Among the Arabs, the Umayyads relied upon the support of those Arabs who were hostile to the descendants of the Companions of the Holy Prophet, the Ahl al-Bayt and of those families of the Quraysh and the Ansars who continued to dwell in Medina, which had become the centre of Islamic theology and learning. In short, the early Umayyad Caliphs were opposed to those sections and classes who were renowned for their piety and devotion to Islam and Islamic State under the Orthodox Caliphate. Instead of that, they relied upon the Syrian tribes as against the tribes of Iraq, whom they sought to crush with the support of the Syrian.

The early Umayyads preserved only one feature of the financial system of the Orthodox Caliphate, *viz.*, the imposition of Kharaj and Jizya upon the non-Arabs, although conditions had altered completely since the days of Hazrat Umar I. Great numbers of non-Muslims had since then adopted Islam and had become the new converts or Mawali. But they were still subjected to the payment of Kharaj and Jizya and other disabilities, first imposed upon the Dhimmis by Hazrat Umar. This was justified on the ground that the conversion to Islam would entail loss of revenue, if the new converts were exempted from the payment of Jizya and Kharaj. The Muslim land-owners paid Ushr which was a much lower tax than the Kharaj. Such were the difficult tasks of administration and finance which Umar II confronted at the time of his accession. His piety, simplicity, and his sense of justice and devotion to Islam would not let him continue the unjust and un-Islamic system of his predecessors.

His Governors and administration. In the choice of his governors and other officials and in his treatment of the Arab tribes, Umar II adopted the policy of equality, impartiality and public welfare. His governnors and 'amils' were selected not for reasons of family or tribe to which they belonged but for their honesty, trustworthiness and public spirit. They were taken from both the Modarite and Himyarite groups of the Arab tribes. For instance, he appointed such Modarite governors as Adi bin Artat at Basra, Abdul Hamid bin Abdurrahman, a descendant of Umar I at Kufa, Amr bin Muslim, a brother of the famous Qutayba, in Sind, Umar bin Hubayra to Mesopotamia and Jarrah bin Abdullah in Khurasan. They were appointed to these provinces not because the Caliph wanted to dismiss the Yemani governors of Sulaiman, but because he considered them reliable and upright men. Similarly, he appointed such Yemenite governors as Samh bin Malik in Spain, and Ismail bin Abdullah at Qayrowan, because they did not belong

to any tribal faction and were merciful to the oppressed people. His sense of justice is shown by the fact that he valued the office of a Qazi or judge more than that of a governor. He believed that the four pillars of the state were the Wali (governor), the Qazi (judge), the Amil (tax-collector) and, lastly, the Khalifa.

The spirit of his just and benevolent administration is reflected in his ordinance addressed to the Governor of Kufa in which he summarized the principles of his government In this ordinance Umar exhorted his governors to abolish all unjust laws and remove all causes of public complaint for "the maintenance of religious state is due to the practice of justice and benevolence. Do not try to depopulate what is populous. Do not try to exact from the subjects anything beyond their capacity. Do everything to improve population and prosperity. Govern mildly and without harshness. Do not take illegal taxes and presents, such as taxes on travellers or on marriages, or the milk of camels and presents on festivals. Do not take Jizya from them who have accepted Islam." This spirit of justice and benevolence, public well-being and devotion to Islam infused all the acts und policies of Umar II. In short, as Wellhausen says, "he felt himself responsible in every point. What lay nearest his heart was not so much the increase of power as the establishment of right."

His treatmentof the Alides and others. Since the days of Muawiya it had become customary with the Umayyad Caliphs and officials to pour abuses and imprecations from the pulpits on the memory of Hazrat Ali and his descendants. But Umar II forbade this reprehensible practice and ordered to offer benedictions to Ali's memory. Moreover, he ordered the garden of Fadak, appropriated by Merwan, to be returned to the Ahl-ul-Bayt. Similarly, the properties of Talha in Medina, seized by Abdul Malik, were also returned to his descendants.

The Crisis of Arabian Feudalism: Jizya and Kharaj. We now come to the most important measure of Umar II, *i.e.*, his policy regarding the vexed question of Jizya and Kharaj. At the time of the early Islamic conquests, Hazrat Umar had laid down that the non-Muslim cultivators and land-owners were to retain their lands and religion on the condition of paying Kharaj and Jizya. No distinction was then made between the two taxes, though it was presumed that Kharaj was a land-tribute, while Jizya was a poll-tax paid by a Dhimmi for the protection of the Muslim State. In course of time, large multitudes of the Dhimmis adopted Islam. But the Umayyad rulers continued to collect Kharaj from them. In Iraq, Hajjaj compelled the new converts or Mawali, who had left their lands and migrated to the cities, to return forcibly to their villages and cultivate their ancestral lands and pay Kharaj on them, so

that the revenues of the state might not decline. They were also refused share in the Bayt-al Mal, to which they were entitled as Muslims.

After consulting the jurists and *ulema*, Umar II laid down the rule that (*i*) kharaj-paying lands of the non-Muslims should not be transferred to Muslims after the year 100 A.H. (*ii*) the lands already transferred would not be affected, but would be retained by their Muslim owners who would pay the Ushr or tithe, and (*iii*) if a non-Muslim adopted Islam, his land would be left with his non-Muslim brethren, in the village-community, while he himself might migrate to the town. He would be free from paying Kharaj for he held no land, and from paying Jizya for he had become a Muslim. The State would also suffer no loss in revenue because the Kharaj would still be paid by the non-Muslim village-community to which the land was then transferred; and (*iv*) those converts who remained in possession of their lands even after adopting Islam and did not leave for the towns, could retain possession. They paid not Kharaj but lease-money which was, however, equal in amount to the Kharaj. In this way Umar II solved a difficult problem without the use of force and compulsion which Hajjaj used and at the same time kept open the door of conversion to those Dhimmis who wanted to become Muslims. The new converts or Mawali were freed from the humiliation of paying Kharaj or subject-tax and were given the right to pensions from the Bayt-al-Mal, like the earlier converts and the Arabs. At the same time, the revenue of the State did not suffer any loss. Thus Umar II saved both his faith and his finances, his soul as well as his treasury.

Umar II's financial reform has been criticised by Von Kremer as an arbitrary measure which completely disorganised a State built by Abdul Malik and Hajjaj and thereby brought about its speedy downfall after Umar's death. But we have to keep in mind certain facts. Firstly, Umar's policy solved a critical problem with which the Umayyad Rule was confronted from the very outset. It tided over the financial crisis for about two decades. Secondly, Umar's reform was both an act of piety and of courage. He made a strong bid to reconcile the Mawali to the Umayyad rule from which they were alienated by the taxes and disabilities imposed by their Arab and Umayyad masters. Thirdly, it opened the door to conversion to millions of the Dhimmis, which was really its supreme purpose in the eyes of the pious Caliph.

But when all is said and done, the fact remains that Umar II's taxation reforms were more pious than practical. They might save his soul but could not save the royal treasury from the consequent loss of revenue. This was the reason why the financial system of Umar II was given up after Hisham and became a dead

letter. In the very last days of the Umayyad rule, Nasr bin Sayyar the last Umayyad governor of Khurasan, evolved a more practical solution of this question, as we shall describe hereafter.

Umar II and the Mawali. The financial reforms of Umar II were primarily a conciliatory move towards the Mawali. He adopted several other measures to reconcile them to the Umayyad rule and to attract them to Islam. He allowed them to "migrate" to the garrison-towns, for migration or Hijrat was a pious act in the eyes of a new Muslim. He freed the Mawali from the payment of both Kharaj and Jizya. He enrolled their names in the Register of the Pensions of the Bayt-al-Mal, especially the names of the Mawali of Khurasan, who were exempted from taxes and given pensions if they participated in the wars of Islam.

His Religious Policy of propagating Islam. One of the basic things which distinguished Umar II from all his Umayyad predecessors and successors (and for that matter from all his non-Umayyad successors as well) was his religious policy of propagating Islam by making adoption of Islam attractive to his non-Muslim subjects. He was one of the few Muslim rulers who employed his political power for purposes of peaceful conversions. The Caliph was more intent upon the spread of Islam than on worldly aggrandisement. In order to persuade his non-Muslim subjects to become Muslims, he issued a rescript or circular letter to all his governors, in which he wrote:

"Wherefore, whosoever accepts al-Islam, whether Christian or Jew or Magian, of those who are now subject to the *jizya* and who joins himself to the body of the Muslim in their abode, *dar*, and who forsakes his abode wherein he was before, he shall enjoy all the privileges of the Muslims and shall be subject to all the duties laid upon them, and it is their duty to associate him and to treat him as one of themselves."[1]

As this rescript shows, Umar II did not use the term "Mawali" for he sought to treat the Muslim converts not as "Mawali" or clients of Arab tribes but as Muslim citizens of the Empire, enjoying equal rights and privileges and performing the same duties as did the Arabs, the original Muslims.

Throughout the provinces of the Empire, the people, finding the benefits and comforts of adopting Islam, became Muslims in large numbers. The governor of Egypt complained to the Caliph that these conversions had caused a fall in the revenues. At this the Caliph remarked that "Allah sent His Prophet as a missionary, and not as a tax-collector." The governor of Khurasan was

1. H. A. R. Gibb, *The Fiscal Rescript of Umar II.* p. 3.

similarly troubled by the loss in revenues. Believing that the people had adopted Islam only to avoid paying subject-tax, he insisted that the converts must be tested in their faith by circumcising them. On hearing this, Umar II forbade it as nowhere enjoined in the Quran: "Muhammad was sent", he said, "to spread the message of Islam among the people, not to circumcise them." In consequence of his religious policy of making adoption of Islam easier and attractive, large multitudes of Persians, Sughdians, Copts, Berbers and other non-Muslim peoples became Muslim. "The policy of Omar," writes Muir, "was thus to fill Khurasan and the adjoining districts with a population of contented believers; to consolidate the Faith and cast the sword aside. And in this policy, so far as his short and transient reign allowed, he was successful."

His treatment of the Dhimmis. In spite of his religious policy of propagating Islam, Umar II followed a policy of toleration and justice towards his non-Muslim subject, the Christians, Jews, Magians, and Hindus, called the Dhimmis or the "protected" subjects. No churches, synagogues or fire-temples were closed or destroyed. He only forbade the construction of new ones. The non-Muslims enjoyed freedom of worship. The Caliph even restored the churches and synagogues seized by al-Walid and others. The Christians of Najran, driven out of Arabia by the orders of Umar I, had settled near Kufa. Holy Prophet had imposed a tax of 2000 pieces of cloth upon them, which was later increased. But Umar II again reduced the tax to its original amount. He expressly ordered his governors to treat the Dhimmis justly and fairly, and not to take Jizya and Kharaj from them with severity. He also prohibited them from accepting presents and gifts on occasions of Nauruz, Mihrigan and other festivals, etc. This shows that though a strict Muslim, Umar II was not a bigoted one.

Events of Umar II's Reign

Fall of Yezid bin Muhallab: 717 A.D. The policies and reforms of Umar II can best be illustrated by the events of his reign. Soon after his accession, Umar took to task Sulaiman's governor of Khurasan, Yezid bin Muhallab, whom he considered a tyrant. He called upon him to render account of the Khums of sixty lakh dirhams, which he claimed to have captured in his campaigns in Tabaristan. Yezid protested that this was an exaggerated figure to magnify his achievements in the eyes of the people and that he had never thought of being called upon to account for it. Umar refused to accept his excuse and insisted that he must return to the State-treasury its due. On his refusal, he imprisoned Yezid in a jail in Aleppo in North Syria, where he remained till Umar's death.

Spain. Disorder prevailed in Spain owing to the incapacity of

its governor, al-Hurr. Umar appointed a Yemanite chief, named Samh bin Malik, in his place. On the instructions of the Caliph, Samh introduced the same fiscal and financial reforms in Spain as in the rest of the empire. A Friday-mosque was built in Saragossa and numerous bridges were constructed or repaired.

After restoring order in Spain, Samh marched against the Christians of South France across the Pyrenees, who were inciting the Spanish Christians of Asturias in North Spain. He captured a chain of cities across the Pyrenees, including Narbonne which became the capital of Muslim France. Samh then marched against Toulouse, an important town in southern France, and laid seige to it. But before he could capture it, Eudes, the Duke of Aquitaine, came to its relief with a large force. The Arabs were outnumbered but fought heroically. During the fighting, Samh was killed and the Arab army retreated under the leadership of Abdur Rahman, who brought it safely across the Pyrenees. The battle of Toulouse occurred in May, 721 A. D., a year afrer Umar's death.

His peaceful policy. Umar was more interested in the peaceful consolidation of his empire than in its enlargement. Soon after his accession he recalled the army of Maslamah, still fighting under the walls of Constantinople. The withdrawal of this force was successfully carried out. Moreover, all frontier expeditions were stopped. People were encouraged to devote themselves to trade and industry. The Berbers in North Africa, the Hindus and Buddhists in Sind and other non-Muslim nations within the caliphate were invited to accept Islam. Many of them became Muslims, like the sons of Raja Dahir in Sind, the Berbers in North Africa and the Sudhdians in Central Asia. He also followed a peaceful policy of conciliation towards the Muslim opponents of the Umayyad Caliphate, like the Iraqi tribes, the Khawarij and the Mawali. His policy was so successful that the fanatical Kharijis, who had given constant trouble to all his predecessors, remained loyal and peaceful during his reign. He was the only Umayyad ruler whom they accepted as a rightful Caliph.

Death of Umar. After a reign of two years and a half, Umar died in February, 720 A. D. Some Abbaside historians asserted that he was poisoned to death by his Umayyad kinsmen who hated his confiscation of their lands. There is no truth in this assertion.

Review of Umar's Caliphate. "Umar ibn Abdul'l-Aziz" writes G. E. Browne, "stands out as a bright and noble exception amidst the godless, greedy and self-seeking rulers of the House of Umayya". His rule was inspired by the considerations of religion than of power and revenue. His aim was to consolidate the

empire than to expand it. His methods were based on justice, tolerance, moderation and public welfare. His life and character were animated by the principles of simplicity, impartiality, honesty and piety, as were the life and character of his great namesake, Umar ibn al-Khattab, the Second Caliph. Islam was the end-all and be-all of his life and policy. That is why the Sunnis regard him as the fifth of the Khulfa-e-Rashideen. Once his wife found him weeping after his prayers and enquired the reason thereof. He said, "God had made me a ruler over the Muslims and the Dhimmis. I was thinking of the poor who are starving, the sick who are destitute, the naked who are in distress, the oppressed who are in trouble, the stranger who is in prison, and of the men with large families but meagre income and the like of them in the length and breadth of my empire, and I felt that when Allah would ask an account of them at my hands on the Day of Judgment, no defence would avail me, and I wept."

A peaceful and attractive reign. Sir William Muir writes, "Though devoid of stirring events, there is much that is attractive in the reign of Omar." He sought to promote peace and prosperity in his empire. He was a friend of the poor and of the distressed. As compared to his predecessors, we find no bloodshed, intrigue and treachery in his reign. Though not averse to Jihad, he hated war for the sake of political expansion and wordly aggrandisement. He sought to narrow the gulf between the rulers and the ruled, between the old and the new converts. He sought to make Islam attractive to the non-Muslims and convert them to the Faith by justice and tolerance. His aim was to make Umayyad rule attractive to its many opponents by a policy of Islamisation, as against the policy of secularisation of his great predecessors, like Muawiya, Abdul Malik and Hajjaj. He was a Muslim of the earlier type. By his policy of conciliation, tolerance, peace and Islamisation, he sought to reconcile its many enemies, the Orthodox Muslims, the Kharijis, the Shia, the Mawali, the Iraqi tribes and others. Once, when his pious son asked him to stamp out evil from society, he remarked, "My beloved son, what you suggest me can be achieved by the use of sword, but a reform which is achieved by the use of sword is never lasting."

His aim was good and his methods were humane. But he failed in his ultimate purpose of Islamisation of the Umayyad rule, perhaps for the reason that his reign was too brief. He ruled only for two years and a half, which proved to be too short a period to bring about a lasting change in the secular system of the Umayyads. Soon after his death, the old Umayyad order returned only to fall for ever three decades later.

Umar's aim : To change Umayyad into Muslim Empire. In

brief, Umar II's aim was to transform the Umayyad empire into a Muslim one. Though an Umayyad and an Arab, he considered himself first and foremost as a Muslim statesman. "He was not trying to destroy the Arab empire nor was he planning to sabotage Umayyad rule. He was trying to change the whole structure to Muslim empire. He realized that the Arab rule established by Muawiya had resulted, after much strife, in the Syrian domination under Abdul Malik. This was bitterly resented in Iraq and then in Khurasan, and was ultimately leading to the breakdown of the empire. To Umar II it seemed that the way to prevent this imminent breakdown was not by using the force of Syrian arms but by substituting for it an ideology around which all his subjects would rally. The ideology was there, and all that was needed was to apply its principles to all the members of society without discrimination, giving everybody the same rights in return for the same duties."[1]

Criticism of Umar's rule : the Orthodox Atavism. The decline and fall of the Umayyad Caliphate which began soon after his death, has been attributed to the changes and reforms which Umar II introduced in the Umayyad system of government and administration. Hitti writes that "though he was inspired by the best of intentions, Umar II's policy was not successful." E. G. Browne is of the opinion that the methods of Umar II "faithfully copied from those which prevailed during the Caliphate of his illustrious namesake Umar ibnu'l Khattab, were too conservative—even reactionary—to achieve success." It was, in brief, an orthodox atavism, a return to the system of Umar I. But it was a difficult and even an impossible attempt, for the circumstances had changed since then. That is the reason why it failed soon after his death.

Several reasons are given for his failure. Firstly, Umar's reforms and changes were diametrically opposed to the methods and policies of his Umayyad predecessors. Consequently, as Dozy says, "the officials found it difficult to adopt themseves to this new principle of the propagation of the Faith, which contrasted so strongly with that which had hitherto been in force." Secondly, his policy of justice and equality towards the Mawali and the Iraqis roused high hopes among them. But when his successors again reversed his policies and thereby dashed their hopes of getting justice and security from the Umayyads, they turned willing ears towards the propaganda of the enemies of the Umayyads, like the Abbasides. Thus the enemies of the Umayyads multiplied manifold after Umar's reign than before. The failure of his policy of conciliation, moderation, justice and Islamisation did nothing,

1. M. A. Shahban, *The Abbasid Revolution*, p. 89.

as Browne says, "but quicken and strengthen the growing reaction against Arab imperialism. Judged from the worldly point of view, in short, Umar II struck a fatal blow at the supremacy of his House and race." Thirdly, his policy of peace also proved detrimental to the maintenance of the Umayyad Empire. It weakened the army and slackened the pace of military expansion. Army is like a machine ; it begins to rust when it is not put into operation. Born in war and conquest, the Arab army, the Muqatila, could only be preserved by ceaseless conquest and expansion. Lastly, Umar's fiscal reforms were impracticable. They increased expenditure and decreased revenue. His policy encouraged adoption of Islam by the non-Muslims, with the result that the number of the Kharaj-paying Dhimmis decreased with the consequent fall in the revenues of the State. Nor could the sale of Kharaj-lands to the Muslims be really stopped. In other words, his fiscal reforms introduced disorder in the revenue system and had to be abandoned by his immediate successors. In short, the great problems confronting the Umayyad Caliphate remained as unsolved by his Orthodox atavism as before.

Chapter 41

YEZID II, THE PRODIGAL UMAYYAD

720-24 A. D./101-105 A. H.

Accession of Yezid : his character. After the death of Umar II, Yezid became the Caliph according to the will of his brother, Sulaiman. Yezid was the third of the sons of Abdul Malik to come to the throne. He was born to one of the wives of Abdul Malik, named Atika, who was the daughter of Yezid I. He is sometimes called Yezid bin Atika, after his proud mother. He prided himself on his Sufyanid descent and considered himself as the best of the sons of Abdul Malik, for he combined in his person the two royal branches of the Umayyads, the Sufyanids on his maternal and the Merwanids on his paternal side. He possessed the pride of his race like his maternal grandfather, Yezid I, after whom he was named. He also resembled him in his strong passions, though he did not inherit the latter's mildness and affability. After the fashion of the early Arabs, he had several wives and slave-mistresses, for whom he contracted a very strong and fixed attachment. Yezid's passion for his large harim had deleterious effect on his character and policy, which accelerated, if not actually started, the decadence and decline of the Umayyad power.

Story of two Yezids. Yezid II was married to a niece of Hajjaj in the reign of Walid I. When Sulaiman became Caliph, he began to persecute the relatives of Hajjaj. He made Yezid bin Muhallab the governor of Iraq, who confiscated their properties in Iraq, including the properties of Hajjaj's niece, in spite of Yezid's protests. Yezid's II then vowed that if he ever became a caliph he would cut Yezid bin Muhallab into a thousand pieces for his insults to his wife. At this Yezid bin Muhallab replied that he would head a rebellion of a hundred thousand troops. During Sulaiman's reign the Himyarities were in ascendency. Umar II's brief reign temporarily halted inter-tribal jealousies. Yezid II threw to the winds, Umar's policy of balance between the rival tribes and became an active partisan of Modarite faction of the Arab tribes in order to wreak vengeance upon his namesake, Yezid bin Muhallab. Thus with him the Modarite party became ascendent in the provinces, and the persecution of the Himyarities began.

Revolt of Yezid bin Muhallab : 720 A. D. As we have said

above, Yezid bin Muhallab was thrown into prison at Aleppo by Umar II for his misappropriation of public money. Yezid was afraid of his mortal enemy, Yezid II. When he heard of Umar's death, he bribed his jailors, escaped from the prison and fled to Iraq, for he expected no mercy from Yezid II. He headed straight for Basra. It was the home-town of the Muhallabid family, and had a large following in it. The governor, Adi bin Artat, tried to oppose his entry, but failed. Basra fell into Yezid's hands. He soon acquired control over the dependencies of Basra, the provinces of Ahwaz, Fars and Kirman. In this revolt he was supported by his own tribe, the Azd of Uman and other Yemeni tribes, like Rabia but was opposed by the Modarite tribes, the Tamim and the Qays. However, he endeavoured to summon all other people to his side by proclaiming that his revolt was to restore the rule of the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet and a war against the godless rule of the Umayyads and the Syrians. But few fell in with his professions of Islamic Rule, for he was otherwise an arragont, luxury-loving worldling. A few Mawali, Kharijis and the Quran-readers joined his standard of revolt. Hasan al-Basri, the leading divine of Basra, denounced him, as a hypocrite. Nevertheless, Yezid collected a large following in Iraq, and advanced towards Kufa to oppose a Syrian army under Maslamah, sent against him.

Battle of Acra : September, 720. Yazid's rebellion shook the Umayyad power in Iraq and in the East, where Muhallab's family had great influence and the Yemeni tribe of Yezid bin Muhallab, the Azd of Uman, had great influence. Other Yemeni tribes also supported him. For some time he remained inactive in Basra. But when he received information that 80,000 Syrians were advancing against him, he set out for Kufa. On the way he captured Wasit. When he approached the Eurphrates, he met the Syrian army under Maslamah near a place called Acra. By lavishly distributing money among the rival tribes, Yezid won the Tamim and other Modarite tribes to his side. But in spite of his large gathering, when fighting began, the disloyal tribes, headed by the Tamim, deserted him. Yezid, however, fought bravely. On hearing that Habib, his favourite brother, had died, he rushed into the enemy ranks and was slain. On this, his remaining brothers retired to Wasit with a few loyal remnants.

Slaughter of the Muhallabids. The Syrian army gave hot pursuit to the fleeing Muhallabids and their followers. They found it difficult to hold Wasit also and fled towards Basra. From there they fled across the gulf into Kirman, where the Muhallabid brothers along with their families, hoped to find shelter with the governor of Kirman, a man appointed by their brother, Yezid. But the governor turned hostile. He captured and beheaded all the remain-

ing brothers and sent their women and children to the Caliph, who sold them into slavery in the bazars of Basra, something which was prohibited by the law of Islam. Thus perished the family of al-Muhallab, who had rendered great services to the Umayyads in the dark days of the Civil War against the Kharijis in the reign of Abdul Malik. In this way, Yezid II completed the work of destroying the Muhallabids which Hijjaj had begun.

Its consequences. The slaughter of the Muhallabids severely shook the Umayyad Caliphate. Their defeat and destruction meant the defeat and discomfiture of their tribe, the Azd, and a declaration of war upon the other Yemeni tribes, who were the rivals of the Modarites. In this manner, Yezid II kindled the fires of the intertribal jealousies and hatred of the Arabs of the North and the South, which soon convulsed the whole Arab Empire. Being influenced by Hajjaj, the Caliph was deeply distrustful of the Muhallabids. But he went too far in his implacable hatred. By their wholesale slaughter he not only declared a war against the Yemeni tribes in general, but convinced them that, as Wellhausen says, "the government was degenerating into a Qaisite party-rule". Yezid II did not rest content with it. He appointed Umar bin Hubayra, a staunch Modarite and an implacable enemy of the Muhallabids, as the governor of Iraq and gave him all powers to do as he liked.

Troubles all over the Empire. In Iraq and Kirman the Himyarite trib s were crushed. But not so in Khurasan, where also the Azd were strong. The two rival tribes of the Arabs began to quarrel among themselves. Maslamah was rewarded by the Caliph for the victory over Yezid with the governorship of Iraq and Khurasan. He remained at Basra while he sent his son-in-law, named Sa'id, as his deputy in Khurasan. Sa'id was no strong ruler. His Arab enemies nicknamed him as "Khuzayna", because he dressed like Persian ladies. He was, however, a great champion of the Modarites which displeased their rivals. So they began quarrelling among themselves. The Sughdians of Ferghana and Khojanda revolted against the Arabs owing to their exactions. Their revolt was crushed, but not very effectively.

Muslamah was replaced by Umar bin Hubayra. Ibn Hubayra belonged to a Modarite tribe, the Fezara. The Azd and the other Yemeni tribes suffered much under his rule. The Kharijis also revolted, after remaining quiet during Umar II's reign. An army, sent against the Khazars and Kipchaks who dwelt on the Caspian coast, was repulsed by them. At Qayrowan, in North Africa, the Caliph appointed an officer of Hajjaj as governor. But he treated the Berbers harshly and was put to death. A rebellion began among the Berbers which was not crushed till the days of Hisham. In Yemen, where Umar II had abolished the heavy taxes imposed by a

brother of Hajjaj, the Caliph re-imposed them. In Spain also the fair and just government of Umar was given up with the result that the tribal jealousies and dissensions broke out again. The defeat at Toulouse occurred at this time. In Sind, the people who had accepted Islam were again subjected to Jizya, at which they too revolted.

Death of Yezid II. While the whole Empire was convulsed from one end to another by discontent and revolts, the Caliph oblivious to this all, devoted himself heart and soul to the pleasures of harem. He had, indeed, greater passion for the harem than any of his predecessors. Among his numerous wives and slave mistresses, he was at this time particularly devoted to two of them, a slave-dancer named Hababa and a slave-songstress named Sallama. One day, while frolicking with Hababa, he playfully threw a grape into her mouth which stuck in her throat and choked her to death. The sorrow-stricken Amir-ul-Momineen would not let her be buried and clasped to her dead body for three day. At last persuaded by Maslamah, he allowed her to be buried. But he was so overwhelmed with grief, that he died seven days later. Thus died Yezid II in January, 724 A. D,

Significance of Yezid's reign. Three things are to be remarked about Yezid's reign. Firstly, he inflamed the fires of the inter-tribal jealousies of the Northern and Southern Arabs by his partisanship for the Modarites and his merciless persecution of the Muhallabids. His motive was merely revenge and not policy. Ultimately the flames of the tribal hatreds and feuds engulfed and destroyed the House of Umayya itself, as we shall see later. Secondly, he abandoned himself to the pleasures of the harim and left the administration of the Empire in the hands of his Modarite governors and officials, especially in the provinces. The result was that his government became really the government of the Modarites. Thus Yezid did what Sulaiman has done before him, only from the other end: he was for the Modarites, while Sulaiman was for the Yemenites. The later history of the Umayyads would illustrate how the partisanship of the Caliphs brought tragic consequences for themselves and their dynasty. Thirdly, he reversed most of the just ordinances and reforms of Umar II. This he did, not out of policy but due to his love for polygamous pleasures and his indifference to the business of the State. "He preferred" as Wellhausen says, "to let things happen, rather than to order them to be done, being weak and indifferent". His reign signifies a definite beginning of the decline of the Umayyad Caliphate. The commencement of the Abbaside Propaganda, of which the first notice was recorded by the Arab historians in his reign, illustrates the beginning of the end of the Umayyads.

THE ABBASIDE MOVEMENT

Commencement of the Abbaside Movement. When Sa'id, nicknamed Khuzayna, was the governor of Khurasan, his officials brought before him a group of merchants who were found convassing the claims of Muhammad bin Ali, the Abbaside pretender to caliphate. They pleaded innocent and the mild governor let them off. But they were the secret emissaries of Muhammad bin Ali, and were actually propagating his claims and collecting adherents to his cause. Let us see who was Muhammad bin Ali and his revolutionary movement. But before we do so, we may mention as the just principle of Political Science and History that no revolt or revolution against an existing State can be successful except in conditions of popular discontent and disaffection.

The Abbaside Family. The Abbasides, the great rivals of the Umayyads, descended from Hazrat Abbas, one of the uncles of the Holy Prophet. He had four sons, namely Abdullah, Fazl, Ubaydullah and Kaisan. The eldest son, Abdullah bin Abbas, generally known as Ibn Abbas, was a great supporter of Hazrat Ali. After the tragic battle of Kerbala, he and his family, like the Ahl-al-Bayt, withdrew from politics and retired to Medina, where they devoted themselves to the study of the holy scriptures of Islam. Ibn Abbas however, died a broken-hearted man soon after. His son, Ali bin Abdullah, also did not take any part in Umayyad politics. When he died in 735 A. D., in the reign of Hisham, his son, named Muhammad bin Ali, succeeded him as the Imam of Banu Abbas,.

Muhammad bin Ali. Muhammad bin Ali was a man of ambition and the first among the Abbaside's to lay claims to the headship of Islam. The Umayyad power had started declining from the days of Yezid II and Muhammad prepared to oust them from the caliphate. With these intentions, he left Medina and shifted his family to a little village in Palestine, called Humayma, on the shores of the Dead Sea. Apparently he had retired from the world, but really Hamayma was not so out-of-the-way place as it looked. It was situated on the pilgrim road from Syria to the Holy Cities of Medina and Mecca, traversed by thousands of pilgrims all the year round. Thus Muhammad kept himself in close touch with the events in Syria by hearing news from the pilgrims as they passed up or down to Mecca. Muhammad also organised a vast net-work of propagandists and secret agents whom he sent to the various provinces of the Umayyad Empire now rampant with growing discontent and resentment against the Umayyads.

Muhammad's claims to Caliphate. Muhammad ibn Ali, the Abbaside pretender to the caliphal throne, was pastmaster in the otherwise modern art of "double think and double talk", *i.e.*, the

Machiavellian art of public lies and deception in order to conceal his real goals and motives. He laid claim to the caliphate in two ways, one before the public in general and the other before his trusted followers. (1) Before the people in general, he stood for the claims of Banu Hashim or Hashimiyya, to the caliphate against the ungodly Uyymay yads. That was the reason why his propagandists preached among the general masses of the Muslims that they stood for the claims to the caliphate for "*al-riza min aal Muhammad*" *i.e.* for the acceptable member from among the people of the Prophet. The supporters of *Ahl al Bayt* took it to mean a descendant of Ali and Fatima, the daughter of the Holy Prophet, while the Abbasid propagandists meant really their own Imam, Muhammad bin Ali bin Abdullah bin Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib bin Hashim. Thus they joined hands with the Shias, the Mawali and all others who believed that the caliphate or the headship of Islam should belong to the Family of the Holy Prophet, *i.e.*, the children of Ali and Fatima. Really, Banu Hashim included both the Fatimids and the Abbasides. It was only when the Abbasides had captured power that the Shia-ite supporters found out the real meaning of this deceitful propaganda. (2) To his close friends and confidential supporters, Muhammad disclosed his claim to the caliphate in his own person. He asserted that Imamship of Islam came to an end among the Fatimids after the Tragedy of Kerbala, for it could not descend to the little boy of six, Ali Zain-ul Abideen, the only surviving male member of the Family of Ali and Fatima. According to the Arab custom, a minor son could not succeed to his father's office. Hence, after Husayn's death, Imamship passed on to his grown-up half-brother named Muhammad ibn al Hanafiya, a son of Hazrat Ali, born to a woman of the Hanafiya tribe. After Ibn al-Hanafiya's death, Imamship descended to his son, Abu Hashim. Before his death in 724, Abu Hashim had transfered the Imamship to Muhammad bin Ali, the head of the Banu Hashim. Hence he now claimed in his own person the headship of Islam.

Abbaside Propaganda system. Muhammad bin Ali also organised a vast propaganda net work to win supporters and followers for his claims to the caliphate. He could now fish in the troubled waters of the Umayyad Empire rampant with discontent and resentment of the Mawali, the Shia, the Kharijis and others. It was, indeed, honeycombed with secret societies and parties, among which the Shia, the Kharijis and the Abbasides were most active. Muhammad knew well that the people in the East, especially the Khurasani and Persian Mawali, were disgusted with the rule of the Umayyads.

The Abbaside propaganda was spread secretly by bands of propagandists or secret agents, called "*da'i*" (pl. *du'at*), who went from place to place in the guise of merchants or in the garb of pilgrims. Their movements were secret and they were warned not to disclose

anything to onybody except when they had put a binding oath on the inquirer. Nevertheless, many of them were discovered and often put to cruel death at the hands of the Umayyad officials. The work of these agents was supervised by a Senate of seventy chiefs, who were controlled by a Council of twelve men, called the Naqibs. At the head of this council of twelve stood the Imam Muhammad bin Ali, the Abbaside pretender. The Abbaside propaganda took roots first in Kufa and then in Khurasan during Hisham's reign.

Chapter 42

THE END OF THE GLORIOUS AGE

Hisham 724-743 A. D./105-125 A.H.

His Accession. On the death of Yezid II, his brother, Hisham, succeeded him in 724 A. D./105 A. H., according to his will. Though he received homage at Damascus, he preferred to remain at Rusafa, near Raqqa, on the bank of the upper Euphrates.

His Character and Policy. Hisham ascended to power at a time when the caliphate was racked by tribal dissensions and rife with troubles at home and abroad. "At this crisis" writes Ameer Ali, "a master's hand was needed at the helm to save the ship of state from drifting to destruction." Could Hisham save the situation?

He had in him much to commend. As a man, he was better than his two brothers, Yezid and Sulaiman. He was not a profligate. He was a true believer, and pious like his cousin, Umar II. Hence the atmosphere of the court became purer. He banished the dance-girls and the songstresses, the wine and revelry from it; and the laxity of Yezid's reign gave place to decorum and austerity. His administration was mild and upright. He was prudent and honourable, and above all things a thoroughly frugal man. He was practical and careful statesman. If his brother, Yezid, was a prodigal son of the Umayyads, Hisham was a businessman. Though pious, he was not an idealist, like Umar II. His long reign of 20 years gave peace and prosperity to the Empire. In spite of his commendable qualities, his reign could not arrest the steady decline of the Umayyad power. Instead of it, his reign was a period of decay and distintegration, partly due to the powerful disruptive forces at work in the Empire over which Hisham had little control, but mainly due to the Caliph's own failings.

Arab historians, like Masudi, regard Hisham as the third and the last statesman of the Umayyad dynasty, ranking him after Muawiya and Abdul Malik. This estimation is to some extent correct. If not an empire-builder like the other two, Hisham was, at least, a continuator of their great achievements. His reign of 20 years was the concluding chapter in the glorious age of the Umayyads. That this age came to a close with his death was, *inter alia*, due to three defects in his character and policy, namely, his suspiciousness, his avarice and his tribal partisanship. His suspicious nature was the ruin of his policy and administration. "Narrow in his sympa-

thies, suspicious in nature," writes Ameer Ali "he trusted nobody, and relied chiefly on espionage and intrigue to prevent hostile combinations and conspiracies. Easily swayed by false reports, he often sacrificed the best servants of the state upon mere suspicion." His business-like spirit made him parsimonious to the extent of avarice and greed. He turned his State into an estate, his political power into an instrument of profit and gain at the expense of his commercial rivals and his subjects. His greediness and exploitation of his peasants and people made them turn against him. His governors and officials, not always wisely chosen and threatened with frequent changes, so played upon his avarice and suspicious nature as to lead him sometimes into cruel actions. These actions, often unwittingly done, deprived him of the friendship and popularity which his mild and liberal nature otherwise deserved. Furthermore, unlike Muawiya and Abdul Malik, he was not neutral in tribal rivalries. On the contrary, he was a partisan of one of the tribal groupings of the Arabs, *viz.*, the Yemenites. As Muir says, "From the first Hisham threw himself into the arms of the Yemeni party and thus alienated from his rule the Northern faction." Lastly, his military policy always misfired and led to defeats, if not disasters. In spite of the great campaigns, his reign was barren of great military victories. As a matter of fact, it witnessed the turn of the tide of military conquests and expansion of Islam, as for example in France. The end of his reign really saw the beginning of the downfall of his dynasty.

Events in the East

Khalid al-Qasri, Viceroy of the East. Hisham's first act as a Caliph was to break up the Qaysite (Modarite) domination in Iraq by dismissing Umar bin Hubayra, the nominee of Yezid II. In his place he appointed Khalid bin Abdullah al-Qasri as Kufa's governor in March 724 A. D. Ibn Hubayra was, in the fashion of the day, tortured and murdered at the instigation of the new viceroy. Khalid had been an official of Hajjaj and was trained in his hard school of administration. Thus Iraq again got a viceroy of the calibre of Hajjaj and Ziyad. He belonged to the Bajila tribe which was weak and neutral in the growing rivalry of the Modar and the Himyar. But, as Khalid had supplanted a Modarite, he and his tribe came to be associated with the Himyarites. "Even though," writes Wellhausen, "he himself had come with the idea of preserving neutrality in the dualism of the clan-groups, he was nevertheless drawn into the party whirlpool, and the hostility of the Modar drove him for good or ill to the side of the Yemen."

Khalid al-Qasri remained the Viceroy of Iraq for 15 years—a period of office as long as that of Hajjaj. Like Hajjaj, he lived at Wasit. But he differed from Hajjaj both in character and policy.

Though he did not lack energy and firmness, Khalid al-Qasri was a mild, peaceful and gentle ruler and a man of enlightened and liberal views. Being not of martial spirit, he came to be regarded as a coward. But it was an exaggeration, like that of his Yemenite partisanship. His policy was one of tolerance in religious matters, firmness in administration and impartiality and justice in regard to the rival claims of the parties and tribes. Though of Yemenite-sympathies, he held the balance between the two rival stocks with tact and judgment, and during thé whole of his administration there was hardly any collision between Modar and Himyar. He treated the Christians and the Jews with tolerance and justice. His mother was a Christian, for whom he got built a church in Kufa. He repaired churches and synagogues and also appointed the non-Muslims to the offices of the state. For these reasons the fanatical among the Muslims accused him of infidelity.

Khalid's administration in Iraq was a long period of peace and prosperity, although he did not earn love and popularity for it. On the contrary, he was bitterly hated and maligned against before the Caliph. But the Caliph protected him from the ill-will of his enemies.

Kbariji rebellions. Owing to his tolerance, Khalid was accused of hostility towards Islam. For this reason there were a few rebellions against him at the end of his 15 years' rule. One of these rebellions was led by Bahlul, a Khariji of Wasit. He raised a cry against the drinking of wine and accused Khalid as "the son of a Christian, who let mosques go the ruin, while he built churches and synagogues and allowed Christians and Jews to take Muslim wives". The cause was popular. Great numbers joined the black standard of the rebel. But he was defeated after several battles by royal army collected from Syria, Mosul and Iraq. Another Khariji rebellion was also put down after hard fighting during 735-36.

Khalid's interest in agriculture. Like Hisham, Khalid had also a great interest in agriculture. 'With the help of his engineer, Hassan an-Nabati, he drained marshes of the lower Tigris, where he created very extensive and productive estates. He raised there great amount of crops which fetched him large income. He dug canals which opened virgin lands. As he distributed them among his favourities, he created ill-feelings against him. The unpopularity of the enterprising viceroy increased still more as he sold the grain at speculative prices. The Caliph as well as the people had complaint against him that he delayed the sale of his corn in order to increase its price. His public works, his management of farms, speculation in food-grain and his riches excited envy of the Caliph and hatred of the people and increased the number of his enemies who constantly filled the ears of the Caliph against him.

Turmoils in Khurasan and Transoxiana. Frontier provinces were usually full of troubles. This was particularly true of the north-eastern provinces of the Umayyad Empire, *viz*., Khurasan and Transoxiana. The chief cause of these troubles was the failure of the successors of Umar II to continue his policy of Islamization and justice to the native population.

The Sughdian Revolt. The revolts in Transoxiana started with the Sughdians, the local population of the province. They had gone over to Islam under Umar II when he gave them the concession that as Muslims they need not pay Jizya. But when Umar II died, the governor re-imposed this tax. This infuriated the Sughdians who revolted. Hisham who took direct interest in the affairs of Khurasan, frequently changed governors. The Sughdian revolt and Turkish inroads led to a long and hard struggle. At the time of Hisham's accession, Muslim bin Said was the governor of Khurasan. The Sughdians were in revolt due to Yezid II's re-imposition of Jizya upon the converts of Islam. Ibn Said was, however, soon dismissed by Hisham. He appointed Khalid al-Qasri's brother, Asad al-Qasri, in his place, but dismissed him soon for he was a fanatical Yemenite. His successors, Ashras bin Abdullah, was a mild governor. But he too provoked the Sughdians by first abolishing and then re-imposing Jizya. The revolt continued. In 729 the Caliph appointed Junayd bin Abdur Raman as the governor of Khurasan. He had won some victories against the Rajputs of South Asian sub-continent where he had advanced upto Annilwara. But he could achieve little in Khurasan. Once the Turks of the Khaqan inflicted a defeat upon the Arab garrison of Samarqand. When Junayd married a daughter of Yezid bin Muhallab, Hisham dismissed him and appointed Asim bin Abdullah in his stead. During his rule, the Arab leader, Harith bin Surayj, revolted and joined the Sughdians and the Turks against the Umayyad power. He raised the black standard of revolt with the old Khariji war-cry, "To the Book of God and to the Sunnah and the will of Ummah." He was a Murjite who sought to purge the evils of the Umayyad rule by a return to early Islam.

Asad al-Qasri. Hisham placed Khurasan again under the direct authority of Khalid al-Qasri, the governor of Khurasan. He appointed his brother, Asad bin Abdullah al-Qasri as its governor for the second time in 735 A. D. Asad al-Qasri was as good a general as he was an administrator. He made Balkh a base for his expeditions against the Sughdians and the Turks. He first marched against the Sughdians and suppressed their rebellion. But most of the rebels, including the Arab rebel Harith bin Surayj, refused to lay downs arms and fled to the Turkish lands of the Khaqan. In 737 A. D., the Khaqan invaded Central Asia with his large army. Asad advanced against him from Balkh. A battle was fought near

Khuttal, with the Arab rebel, Harith, fighting against the Arab on the side of the Turks—the first occasion in Islamic History when a Muslim fought with the Muslims on the side of their enemies. Both sides fought bitterly, with much slaughter of the Turks. But the battle ended indecisively. Asad retreated to Balkh to winter, while the Khaqan went to Tukharistan.

Death of the Khaqan. Next year, in 738 A. D., the Arabs and the Turks again renewed the fighting. But the Khaqan was killed by his own Turkish chief, named Korsul, in his camp. It was the time when he was preparing to march on Balkh. His death was signal for the Turkish hordes to flee across the border. The news of his death was received by the Caliph in Damascus with great jubilation, for he was considered as a great foe of Islam.

Nasr bin Sayyar : His Fiscal Reform. Asad did not survive his great rival long. He died in 738 A. D., a few months after the dismissal of his brother, Khalid al-Qasri. In Asad's place, Hisham appointed a Modorite, named Nasr bin Sayyar, as the Governor of Khurasan. Nasr completed the work of pacification of Khurasan which Asad had virtually completed. He made peace with the Sughdians.

Arabs in Khurasan had a long-standing grievance against the *dihqans* or old Persian local gentry or landlords, whom the Caliphal government had entrusted the task of collecting kharaj or land-tax from Persian land-owners and cultivators under the treaties made with them at the time of the conquest. As we have said in a previous chapter, many Arab tribesmen had, in course of time, taken to agriculture and other occupations than warfare. These Arabs were called the Settlers, as distinguished from the Muqatila or warrior class of the Arabs. When Nasr ibn Sayyar became governor, he sought to remove the Settlers' grievances. He noticed that the Persian dihqans used their authority in the assessment and collection of taxes in favour of their own people, who maintained their religion against the Settler-Muslims whose burdens of taxation were unjustly increased. He appointed Mansur ibn Uman in 739 A. D., as a tax-commissioner to supervise the assesment and collection of taxes so that the Muslim might not be burdened with additional taxes by the Dihqans. D. C. Dennett comments on Nasr's reform: "Nasr was a reformer, but no innovator. He did not create as new system, nor set up new distinctions, nor revolutionize the fiscal administration of Arab empire. All he did was to correct the abuses existing in the old system".[1]

1. D. C. Dennett, *Conversion and the Poll Tax in Early Islam*, p. 121. Cambridge. Massachusetts. 1950.

Although Nasr bin Sayyar was a good administrator and did much to restore Umayyad power in the troubled province of Khurasan, yet he even could not put an end to the rot which had started in this province of the Umayyad Empire, as subsequent events were to show abundantly.

War with the Byzantines. Though Hisham was not a warrior, he was yet ready to renew hostilities with the Greeks in Asia Minor. He sent a number of troops against them under the command of his two sons, Muawiya and Sulaiman. They did not achieve anything. Muawiya died while hunting foxes, upon which his father remarked, "I intended him to be trained for caliphate, but he ran after the foxes." One Arab warrior, named al-Battal, achieved fame as a Muslim hero in these wars with the Christians of Byzantium. But they produced no other results except much bloodshed and pillage.

Armenia and Azerbaijan. Beyond the northern borders of Armenia and Azerbaijan lived the tribes of the Turks and the Khazars along the Caspian Sea. In 727, the Turkish tribes raided Armenia. Four years later, the Khazars attacked Armenia and Mesopotamia with a large force. They defeated the governor, Jarrah bin Abdullah al-Hakami, and killed him and advanced as far south as Mosul in Mesopotamia. Here they were met by an army, chiefly composed of volunteers and Quran-readers, collected by Said al-Harshi, whom Hisham had hurriedly sent against the Khazars. They were defeated with terrible slaughter and fled across the borders. In spite of his successes, Hisham recalled Said al-Harshi and re-appointed his brother, Maslama, as the governor of Armenia in 733. A year later, he replaced Maslama by his cousin, Merwan bin Muhammad. Merwan conquered Georgia in the Caucasus mountains. For twelve years, he remained the governor of Armenia and Mesopotamia, till in 744 he himself became the Caliph.

Spain and France. Though Hisham did not achieve much in military field, his armies were fighting almost on all frontiers of his Empire. Nevertheless, he failed to achieve any lasting success against the Christendom in the West, just as he failed against it in the East. In Spain, the governors were frequently changed. When, in Umar II's days, as-Samh fell under the walls of Toulouse, the retreating army elected Abdur Rahman al-Ghafiki as the new Amir. But he held this office only for a few months, till the arrival of the new governor, Anbasah bin Sahim al-Kalbi, in August, 721. Shortly after Hisham's accession, Anbasah crossed the Pryenees and conquered Carcassone, Nimes, Narbonne and several other places of importance in South France. He made friendship with the native inhabitants, and 'strengthened the Saracenic position in Southern France." But Anbasah was killed in an ambush in South France in 726 A. D. His death again threw the Arab

administration in Spain and military operations in France into disorder. During 726 to 731, five governors were changed till 731, when Abdul Rahman al-Ghafiki was appointed governor. During this time, the administration of the country was completely paralysed by these changes. In consequence, the Christian rebels of the Asturias were emboldened to raid Muslim territories.

Abdur Rahman al-Ghafiki : April, 731. At last the inter-tribal rivalry and discontent in Spain due to Kelbite domination attracted Hisham's attention to that distant province. He decided to act over the head of the Viceroy of Qayrowan by appointing a man of his own choice, namely Abdur Rahman al-Ghafiki in April, 731. He was incomparably the ablest and most patriotic ruler Spain ever had under the Umayyad rule. He combined in an eminent degree a capacity for civil administration with military talent of the highest order. His influence was equally great over the Northern and Southern tribes of the Arabs. The soldiers adored him for his generosity, justice and gentleness of heart. Soon after his appointment, he toured the whole province and punished the Qaids or local magistrates found guilty of injustice. The fiscal administration was carefully revised and public peace restored. Thus he stopped bribery and corruption which were rampant in the country. He took particular interest in reforming and re-organising the army, recruited from the Berbers and commanded by the Arabs. He suppressed Christian rebels and fortified the frontier fortresses.

Invasion of France. After restoring law and order in Spain, Abdur Rahman invaded France. Its immediate cause was the revolt of the Arab governor of Arab possessions in South France, named Uthman bin Abi Nisa, whom the Europeans called Munuza. He was disappointed when Abdur Rahman was made governor. He had married the daughter of Eudes, the ruler of Aquitaine and revolted against the Muslims. Upon this Abdur Rahman marched into South France against him and suppressed his rebellion.

After crushing Munuza's rebellion, Abdur Rahman undertook the conquest of France. He conceived a plan to conquer France just as Musa had before him. With this intention, he attacked the Duchy of Aquitaine in South France and defeated the Duke named Eudes at Arles in the beginning of 732. He then captured Bordeaux, the capital of Aquitaine. He finally defeated the Duke in the battle of the Dordogne. The Duke fled to North France and sought the help of the Frankish King, Charles, who later assumed the title of 'Martel'—the Hammer.

Advance into North France. In the meanwhile, Abdur Rahman advanced from South France into Central France, where he captur-

ed the cities of Lyon, Besancon, Sens and finally Tours. He left garrisons in each city he captured. While at Tours, Abdur Rahman received the news of the advance of the Frankish army. Upon this he went out of Tours and took up his position at a place between Tours and Poitiers.

Battle of Tours. 12-21 October, 732 A. D./Ramazan 114 A. H. In the meanwhile, Charles Martel collected a huge army from the length and breadth of his vast Frankish Empire and advanced against the Muslim army in response to Eude's appeal for help. The armies of Islam and Christendom met each other most probably on the banks of the river Loire near Tours, in the month of October, 732 A.D.

The state of the Muslim army caused anxiety and apprehension. The Muslims had, during their victorious march, depleted southern France of its wealth. They plundered all its rich churches and monasteries and carried away with them huge treasures, spoils and captives. These rich burdens caused disputes among them, weakened discipline and diverted the soldiers' mind from fighting to the protection of their booty. Their commander, Abdur Rahman, was alive to these dangers. He tried in vain to induce them to abandon some of them, but he did not insist fearing mutiny. Moreover, dissensions were rife between the Arabs and the Berbers, who formed the bulk of the army and were more anxious to return home with their huge spoils. Furthermore, the Muslims were exhausted by the long and continuous advance from the Pyrenees to the heart of France, and were reduced in numbers by the garrisons left behind. These factors became the causes of their defeat.

Fighting began on the 12th or 13th October and continued for about two weeks in a desultory manner. At last on 21st October, hard fighting began. At first the Muslims had the upper hand, but then a cry broke out that the Franks had penetrated up to the Muslim camp and were plundering it. Upon this, a large cavalry force withdrew to defend the camp. Abdur Rahman who tried to stop them failed. He was hit and killed by an enemy arrow. Upon his death complete disorder spread among the Muslim soldiers and they retreated towards their threatened camp. The Franks pressed hard upon them, but the night fell and the two forces separated. During the night, the Muslim commanders quarrelled among themselves and found safety only in a hasty retreat to the south in the darkness of the night. When the day dawned, the Frankish King, Charles and his ally, Eudes, advanced cautiously towards the Muslim camp but found it deserted. It was a victory for the Frankish King for which reason he assumed the title of 'Martel', the hammer. But he did not pursue the fleeing enemy.

The causes of defeat of the Muslims in the battle of Tours

have been hinted at already. Briefly, they were (*i*) the enmity between the Arabs and the Berbers; (*ii*) the rivalry between the Arab tribes; (*iii*) the immense booty which they had accumulated and carried to the battlefield, and (*iv*) the winter conditions to which the Arabs were not accustomed.

Consequences. So many of the Muslim leaders, besides Abdur Rahman, were killed on the battlefield that it was remembered by Arab historians as "*Balat ash-Shuhada*"—the Pavement of the Martyrs. Abdur Rahman's death again removed a man who alone could preserve unity and peace in the province of Spain. The Muslim defeat in the battle of Tours proved disastrous not so much for the Umayyad Caliphate as for the further progress of Islam and the Muslim Empire. Tours represented the highest level-mark of the Islamic advance into Europe.

Effects on World-History. Muslim defeat in the Battle of Tours had far-reaching effects on the world history. It saved Christian Europe from being converted to Islam. Gibbon has rightly pointed out that the Arabs had advanced one thousand miles from Gibraltar to Tours. If they had won at Tours, their victory would have carried them to the farthest limits of Europe. The Arab navy would have conquered England, where "perhaps the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelations of Mahomet." A German historian, von Schlegel, says: "Charles Martel saved with his sword Christian nations of the West from the deadly grip of all-destroying Islam." Ameer Ali remarks aptly: "On the plains of Tours the Arabs lost the empire of the world when almost in their grip." A modern Arab historian, Enan, has summarised the historic consequences thus: "We think that it was the greatest decisive encounter between the East and West. In the plains of Tours and Poitiers the Arabs lost the domination of the world and the destiny of the old world was changed; the torrent of Islamic conquests retired before the nations of the North, as it retired sometime previously before the walls of Constantinople. United Islam never had another opportunity to penetrate into the heart of Europe in the same numbers, determination and confidence as when it marched to Balat al-Shuhada."

Expulsion from South France. After Abdur Rahman's death Hisham appointed Uqba bin Hajjaj al-Saluli. Uqba again advanced into South France, but Charles Martel stopped the Arab advance and captured Avignon. He even captured Narbonne which had been since long in Muslim hands. Uqba died in 740. In his place, Hisham appointed Abdul Malik bin Qutn as the governor or Spain. The Berber revolt in North Africa forced the

Arabs in Spain to divert their forces to that region. This enabled Charles Martel not a little in pushing the Arabs out of Southern France. He entered into allience with the French princes and rulers in South France and drove out the Muslims from there.

In Spain the Arab and Berber tribes also revolted and killed the governor, Abdul Malik in 741. A period of confusion set in, during which several governors came one after an other. At last Yusuf bin Abdur Rahman al-Fihri became the Governor of Spain in 746. He was the last of the Umayyad governor. When the Umayyad Empire fell in 750, an Umayyad prince, named Abdur Rahman, succeeded in reaching Spain in 756, and founded the Umayyad Emirate of Spain or Andalusia. It was indeed, extremely difficult for the Caliph in Damascus to control a distant province like Spain because the tribes and political factions in Spain constantly revolted and fought with each other, the Himyars against the Modars, the Arabs against the Berbers, the old Muslims against the new and so on.

The Revolt of the Berbers. One cause of the Arab defeat in France was the revolt of the Berbers of North Africa. Unwittingly the Berbers proved to be valuable allies of the Franks. Their revolt made it impossible for the Arabs to resume their advance in France.

Causes. The Berbers rebellion was caused by the Kharijite propaganda against the tax-collecting greed of the Umayyad rulers. The Berbers were enraged that though they were good Muslims and zealous fighters in the cause of Islam, yet the Arab officials treated them as Kharaj-paying subjects. Umar II's ordinance of abolishing such taxes was neglected after his death. The Kharijis took full advantage of the Berbers resentment. One of their sects, called the Suffarides, was most active in spreading bitter feelings against the Umayyad rulers whom they accused as a godless race, more interested in collecting taxes than in defending Islam. The Amil of Tangiers, named Umar bin Abdullah al-Muradi, imposed Jizya on the Berbers even though they had adopted Islam. This became the immediate cause of their revolt. They rose *en masse* in 740, killed the Amil and seized the city of Tangiers.

The Berber revolt soon spread over whole of Ifriqia from Morocco to Qayrowan. The rebels, headed by the Kharijis, marched from Tangiers towards Qayrowan. On the way they were met by an imperial army commanded by Khalid bin Habib. Though greatly outnumbered the Arab chiefs fought with characteristic recklessness. But they were surrounded, overwhelmed and killed to the last man. Hence this battle was

known as the "Battle of the Nobles"—*Ghazwat al Ashrāf.* The rebels victoriously advanced onto Qayrowan. On hearing the news of this reverse, Hisham in great rage dismissed the governor and sent a new commander, named Kulthum bin Ayaz, with 30,000 Syrian troops. But Kulthum was also defeated and killed. The Caliph now appointed Hanzala bin Safwan al-Kalbi as the governor of Qayrowan, in 741. On reaching Qayrowan, Hanzala at once put its fortifications in order and roused the people to a courageous defence of their city. It was long before the general and the city were put to a hard test. A huge rebel force of 300,000 men marched on Qayrowan and laid siege to it. A Khariji leader, Ukasha, was the first to attack, but was repulsed. The siege lasted for several months. At last the Berbers were defeated and fled away. The remnants were pursued and destroyed. Hanzala restored peace and order in North Africa by his mild and just administration. However, the result of Berber revolt was that the Arab advance in France, Sicily and Sardinia came to a halt.

Last Days of Hisham : Fall of Khalid al-Qasri. In May, 737, Hisham dismissed Khalid al-Qasri from the governorship of Iraq and appointed Yusuf bin Umar al-Fazari of Banu Thaqif in his place. He was a Modarite and hated Khalid, whom the tortured in order to extort suspected wealth from him. But he was released after some time by the Caliph's orders. Khalid was dismissed on various grounds; such as the suspected embezzlement of public funds, his sympathies for the Alides, his alleged hostility to Islam, tolerance of the Christians and his agricultural activities in which he competed with the Caliph himself and speculated in food-grains which made him unpopular both with the Iraqis and the Caliph. Despite all this Khalid al-Qasri had ruled Iraq with vigour and justice for fifteen years and was the last great administrator of the Umayyads.

Revolt of Zayd in Iraq : Jan. 740. Khalid's successor in Iraq, Yusuf bin Umar, was a small man with a long beard. He was a relative of Hajjaj and a fanatical Modarite who persecuted the Yemeni party. Though pious, he was of cruel and even savage nature. Hisham did not interfere with his persecutions of the Alides. In course of his tortures of Khalid, he discovered that he had given money to one of the Alides, named Zayd bin Ali bin Husayn bin Ali. Hisham summoned him to Damascus for inquries. Dissatisfied with his replies, the Caliph sent Zayd to Yusuf bin Umar in Kufa, where he was cruelly tortured by the latter. Zayd, however, managed to escape from his clutches and hid himself in Kufa. As usual, the fickleminded Kufans were at this time ready to revolt against the Umayyads due to the cruel persecutions of the Governor. A large number of the

Alide supporters told Zayd that the time was favourable for the overthrow of the hated Umayyads. They promised him full support in this venture and 80,000 Kufans took oath of allegiance at his hands. A day was fixed for the rising.

At first, Yusuf bin Umar was in the dark about the preparations for revolt. But two of Zayd's followers disclosed them to him. He collected the Kufans in a public square and threatened them with dire consequence if they revolted. His threat had its desired effect. Only 200 of Zayd's supporters remained loyal to him and revolted. But they were easily crushed by a force of 2000 Syrians. Zayd was also killed in January, 740. His son, Yahya, a youth of seventeen, managed to escape to Persia, where he remained in hiding for several years. At last, he was captured and put to death in the days of Walid II.

Its Consequences. Zayd's rebellion was a little affair, but it produced great consequences. It increased the people's sympathy for the persecuted Alides, the Ahl al Bayt. The Umayyads were now hated by them more than ever. The Persian Mawali of Iraq and Khurasan increasingly became the supporters of the Hashimide claims to caliphate. In such conditions, the Abbaside propaganda spread far and wide among them. Indeed, the death of Zayd removed an Alide rival of the Abbasides whose Imam, Muhammad bin Ali, now stood forth as a sole claimant to the caliphate. The Umayyads "could have done their antagonists no better service than thus rid them of such dangerous rivals in the struggle for the throne".

Appearance of Abu Muslim. At about this is time, the Abbaside Imam, Muhammad bin Ali, purchased a slave named Abu Muslim in Mecca while on pilgrimage. There is a dispute about his origin. He is variously said to be born near Kufa and Ispahan, of Persian or Arab parentage. Whatever his origin, Abu Muslim was a remarkable man, for he contributed more than anyone else to the overthrow of the Umayyad dynasty. By his intelligence and ability he soon became the most confidential servant of Muhammad bin Ali. After Zayd's rebellion, Muhammad sent him to Khurasan to collect and organise the Abbaside supporters in that province. When Muhammad died in about 743 A. D., he entrusted Abu Muslim to the care and confidence of his son, Ibrahim, whom he had nominated as his successor or Imam.

Death of Hisham : Feb. 743. In February, 743, Hisham died at Russafa, near Qinnisreen, at the age of about 60.

Review of his reign. According to Masudi, Hisham reigned nineteen years nine months and nine days. Arab historians considered him, after Muawiya and Abdul Malik, as the third and last great ruler of the House of Umayya. His long and chequered reign saw the Muslim Empire reach its zenith, extending from the confines of Mongolia to the heart of France. Though narrow-minded, Hisham was prudent, pious and tolerant towards the non-Muslims. He was a friend of the traditionalists, a foe of the new-fangled Qadariya, who raised dogmatic questions and asserted the freedom of will. Though he tried to be above tribal parties, but he was inclined towards the Yemenites, as proved by his reliance upon Khalid al-Qasri and his Kalbite secretary, named Abrash. He was very frugal and economical, both in respect of public treasury and his private purse. His aim was to fill his exchequer by careful financing of public moneys and by developing his large feudal estates. For this reason he was regarded miserly and greedy. It caused discontent against him, of which the Abbaside propagandists took full advantage. "His chief concern was," writes Muir, "to increase taxation to the utmost, and he spent the revenues in making canals, building castles, and laying out pleasure gardens." It is said that the great Abbaside Caliph, Mansur, admired and imitated his methods of government.

His responsibility for the decline and fall of the Umayyads. After the death of Hisham the Umayyad Caliphate began to decline rapidly. How far was he himself responsible for it? Really the decadence of the Umayyads had set in long before Hisham. In fact, his long and mild reign delayed rather than accelerated the inevitable end, for with all his demerits, his region was an exemplary one. It was not his fault that the Caliphate, already undermined, continued sinking. His virtues could not arrest the process of decline and decadence of the caliphate for it was secretly undermined by the secret propagandists of the Abbasides and the open rebellions of the Kharijis and the growing incursions of the foreign enemies like the Franks in the West and the Turks in the East.

Inner Contradictions of the Arabian Qati'a Feudalism: Hisham, in his person, symbolised the inner contradictions of the big or Qati'a feudalism of the Umayyad period. He endeavoured to amass wealth by turning his big estates into profit-making capitalistic enterprises. Like Khalid al-Qasri, he was interested in agriculture, but he was chiefly concerned about the price at which he could sell his corn. The result was that he was everywhere disliked. Still worse, he regarded the state itself as an estate from which the greatest possible amount of money was to be extracted. His governors were forced to pay him the highest possible sums

and he did not trouble himself about the means they took to extort them. His parsimony became the cause of his unpopularity and lessened his influence. He was maligned as mean and miserly for his economical habits. The Abbaside agents took full advantage of the people's dislike for his frugal and businesslike spirit.

CHAPTER 43

THE DECLINE OF THE UMAYYADS

Walid II : Yezid III and Ibrahim

Accession of Walid II. As nominated by his father, Walid II ascended the throne after Hisham's death, without any opposition. He received the news of his uncle's death with public expression of joy and hurried to Damascus to be crowned. With indecent haste he drove out Hisham's women and children from the caliphal palace.

Walid's character. Walid II resembled his father, Yezid II, except in physique. He was attractive in appearance with a fine body. But he was, on the whole, a worthless man, without any morality or common decency. Suyiti describes him as "a libertine, a wine-drinker and a breaker of the divine commandments". He was a lover of music, horses and dogs. He was a poet, but sang the songs of the delights of wine and music, as he says in one of his verses quoted by Nicholson :

There is no true joy but lending ear to music,
Or wine that leaves one sunk in stupor dense;
Houris in Paradise I do not look for :
Does any man of sense ?

Walid II was a gloomy person of evil ways. Hisham endeavoured to reform him, but only to earn his bitter hatred. Upon this Hisham thought of nominating his son, Muawiya, in his place but was prevented by the united opposition of his Umayyad clan. Walid left Hisham's court and lived in a village in Palestine till Hisham's death. On becoming Caliph he abandoned himself to an utterly intemperate and indecent life. He inflicted all sorts of indignities and insults upon the sons and daughters and officials of Hisham. As Hisham had left a well-filled treasury, he liberally squandered it in showering gift and stipends on the populace. The pay of the soldiers was enhanced. He also made generous allowances for the aged and the blind. Thus he won popularity for some time. However, he soon lost it by his fickle temperament, debased nature and senseless cruelties. The Empire was in a critical situation and needed a firm ruler and a good administrator. But Walid II surrounded himself with musicians, songstresses and slave-

girls, horses and hounds, and cut himself off from his relatives and equals. Indeed, he was more interested in music, wine and dogs than in his duties as a Caliph. He was never serious or careful. He spent most of his time in the desert where he built a palace for himself.

His cruelties. Walid II was a gloomy and revengeful person. Soon after his accession, he imprisoned, tortured and put to death the sons of Hisham. Similarly the sons of Walid I were cruelly treated. The ill-treatment of Hisham's and Walid I's sons, who had fought holy wars against the Greeks, disgusted the people of Syria. Yahya, the son of Zayd bin Ali, who had taken shelter in Persia, was searched out and put to death, which roused the people of Khurasan against the Caliph. In Syria, the whole tribe of Banu Abs was cruelly treated, for they had backed Hisham's intention to nominate his son instead of Walid. They were delivered to their mortal enemy, Yusuf bin Umar al-Fazari, who subjected them to various hardships. Worse than this was the death of Khalid al-Qasri. Since his dismissal in 738, Khalid had quietly lived in Damascus. He did not participate in the plots which were now hatched against Walid. But the Caliph became angry with him for he did not disclose the names of those who were plotting against him. He was delivered to his mortal enemy, Yusuf bin Umar, the governor of Iraq, who tortured him to death. Khalid's death roused the anger of the Yemeni tribes in Syria, who joined hands with the Yemani tribes in Iraq against the Caliph, a thing which had never happened before in the Umayyad history. Hitherto the Arab tribes in Syria, whether Himyar or Modar, had remained loyal to the reigning Umayyad Caliph. But Walid's cruelties alienated their loyality and kindled the fire of inter-tribal feuds. Lastly, the Caliph nominated his two sons, born of a slave-girl, as his successor. The whole Umayyad clan was opposed to it. They endeavoured to dissuade him, but he forced the people to take oath of allegiance at their hands. This became the immediate cause of revolt against the Caliph.

Revolt against Walid II. The people of Damascus and the Yemeni tribes, led by Yezid, a son of Walid I, revolted in April, 744 and captured Damascus. Walid took refuge in a fortress in South Syria. The rebel force marched against him and killed him in the fortress.

Significance of Walid's death. The murder of the reigning Umayyad Caliph showed that the foundations on which the Umayyad Caliphate was built were shaken. Syria was the home province of the Umayyads and their power was upheld by the loyalties of the Syrian tribes. But the revolt of the Yemeni tribes in Syria shattered this loyalty. Moreover, the Umayyad family was also

split into two. One of the Umyyad princes had headed the revolt against the reigning Caliph. It was a war in the reigning family. The spirit of lawlessness had penetrated into the body politice of the Umayyad Caliphate.

YEZID III : APRIL TO SEPTEMBER, 744

Character of Yezid III. On the death of Walid II, Yezid III became the Caliph. He was pious, religious and gave a promise of better times to come. In the very first speech on the occasion of his homage ceremony he promised not to erect new buildings, to dig no canals, to store no treasure, not to keep soldiers too long on the frontiers, not to burden the non-Muslims and cultivators with excessive taxes and always to listen to the complaints of the weak against the strong. "If I fail", he aded, "to do so, you may depose me ; if you have a better man than myself, you may elect him and I shall be the first to do homage to him because homage is not to man but to God to whom we unconditionally obey.."

But the regin of Yezid III lasted only six months—too brief to do any good. Still, he reduced the pay of the soldiers which was increased by his predecessor, Walid II. For this reason he was nicknamed as "*an Naqis*"—the retrencher. He relied upon the Kalbites (Yemeni tribes of Syria) with whose support he had come to power. We find no Modarite among his supporters.

Iraq. Soon after his accession, Yezid dismissed the Modarite governor of Iraq, Yusuf bin Umar and appointed a Kalbite, Mansur bin Jumhur, in his place. Yusuf tried to rouse the Modarites against the new governor, but failed. He fled to Balqa in Jordan, but was later captured and sent to Damascus. He was there put into jail along with the two sons of Walid II. But as Mansur was not acceptable to the people of Iraq, Yezid sent a son of Umar II, named Abdullah as the next governor of Iraq.

The provinces of Sind, Egypt and Sistan accepted Yezid as Caliph. But the two powerful Umayyad governors, Nasr bin Sayyar in Khurasan and Merwan in Armenia and Mesopotamia, refused to recognise him. In Qayrowan, Abdur Rahman's revolt against Hanzala remained unpunished, while in Spain the tribes were quarrelling among themselves. But before Yezid could tackle any one of these problems, he died in September, 744 A. D., which corresponded to the end of year 126 A. H.

IBRAHIM : THE 13TH CALIPH

Before his death, Yezid nominated his brother, Ibrahim, as his successor. Ibrahim's reign, however, lasted only a couple of months and his authority did not extend beyond Damascus.

Merwan overthrows Ibrahim. Merwan, the governor of Mesopotamia, took up arms against Ibrahim. On the pretext of rescuing the sons of Walid II from captivity, he marched upon Damascus. He inflicted a defeat upon an army sent by Ibrahim at Ain-ul-Jar, near Balbek, and reached Damascus. Upon this Ibrahim fled from the capital, after putting the young sons of Walid and Yusuf bin Umar to death. In this way Merwan's path to the throne was cleared by his rival. The people of Damascus welcomed Merwan and proclaimed him as next Caliph in November, 744 A. D. Most historians do not include Ibrahim in the category of Umayyad caliphs. He later submitted to Merwan and was pardoned by him.

CHAPTER 44

THE THIRD CIVIL WAR AND THE FALL OF THE UMAYYADS

Merwan II : 745-750 A. D.

Merwan's early life and character. Merwan II was the son of Muhammad who was the son of Merwan I. Being born of a Greek slave mother, he was not considered fit for the caliphate by most of his proud Umayyad clansmen. His frther, Muhammad, was made governor of Mesopotamia by his brother, Abdul Malik. He lived mostly at Harran, the capital of Mesopotamia, where Merwan was born and lived the early part of his life. He acquired great liking for that city. In 732, Hisham made Merwan the governor of Mesopotamia and Armenia, which position he retained for the next twelve years. Merwan undertook constant campaigns against the Greeks and the Turkish tribes across the frontiers of his provinces. He was fit for this job, because he was a man of active, soldierly nature. When Yezid III died, he marched upon Damascus on the pretext of placing Walid II's sons on the throne. He defeated Ibrahim and himself became the Caliph.

At the time of his accession, Merwan was more than sixty years of age. Though old, he was still full of vigour and energy. He had been a soldier all his life and was renowned for his powers of endurance and hardihood, for which reason he was nicknamed as the "ass of Mesopotamia"—not out of contempt but out of respect for his bodily strength. He was simple and ascetic in habits, and unlike most other Umayyads, indulged in no luxuries or pleasures. Indeed, he loved to live not in the palace but in the camp among his soldiers and shared their simple fare as well as their privations. This was the reason why age did not dim his energy. Moreover, like Muawiya I, he was devoted to the study of ancient history.

Merwan as a ruler: Though a far better man than several of his predecessors, Merwan had some grievous shortcomings which brought about not only his own death but also the destruction of his dynasty. They were, briefly, his obstainate spirit, his tribal partisanship and his complacent lethargy which he developed during the last critical days of his reign.

During six years of his reign, Merwan was confronted with an ever-widening crescendo of revolts and rebellions from Syria to

Spain and from Iraq to Khurasan. In this hour of crisis, something more than soldierly qualities were required of the Caliph. The need was more for a statesman than a soldier. Merwan was a soldier and nothing more. He did not rise above the party strife which had divided the Arab tribes into two warring groups of the Modar and the Himyar. Merwan did not endeavour to reconcile the conflicting parties. Instead of this, he himself became a zealous partisan of one of them, the Modarites, with whose support he had defeated his rival, Ibrahim, and captured the caliphate. And with their support he expected to retain it. But by this he kindled the fires of tribal feuds and wars which enabled the enemies of the Umayyads, the Kharijis and the Abbasides, to overthrow their hated rule. His obstinacy and hot temper, combined with his partisanship, made him a still worse ruler. Merwan had not only the endurance of a donkey but also its obstinacy. This weakness prevented him from understanding the need for a policy of conciliation and broad-mindedness in tackling the tribal dissensions and feuds which had split his empire into bits. His partisanship for the Modarites added feul to the fires of the tribal jealousies and wars. His favouritism for the Modarites and his harshness towards the Yemenites inflamed the tribal wars even in Syria. He thus knocked the bottom from under the Umayyad Empire and buried it under the ruins of the tribal wars from Khurasan to Spain.

Merwan as a soldier. Merwan is credited with two military reforms. (1) He abandoned the old tribal organisation of the Muqatila for his royal army. The tribal organisation weakened the army, partly because the soldiers were volunteers and were anxious to return home after each campaign, and mainly because they remained loyal to their tribal chiefs under whose leadership they fought rather than to their commander. Instead of the tribal forces, Merwan employed regular troops whom he paid, maintained and disciplined himself. (2) He re-introduced a change in the method of fighting. Upto his days, Arab armies used to fight in lines, called 'safuf', but Merwan substituted for them the columns called "Karadis" by the Arabs. For years he fought successfully with the Greek and the Turks with this new organisation.

The Yemeni and the Modarite tribes of Syria. Despite his soldierly qualities, Merwan was unable to restrain the revolts of the Arab tribes. Hitherto every tribe in the provinces of the Empire had revolted against the Umayyads except Kalbi or Yemeni tribes in Syria, "the loyalest of the loyal" as they were called. On the whole, the Syrian province had remained absolutely loyal to the Umayyad rule. But Walid II's murder and early death of Yezid III divided the Kalbi (Himyarite) and the Qaysi (Modarite) tribes of Syria into two opposing camps. The Qays were for Merwan, while the Kalb were against him. Hence they rose into revolt

against him. It can be easily imagined that if Syria was split into two, other provinces would split up all the more so. The jealousies and feuds of the Syrian tribes destroyed the Umayyad Caliphate.

Yemenite revolts in Syria. Merwan transferred his capital from Damascus to Harran in Mesopotamia, his beloved birthplace. This was felt by all the Syrians, especially the Yemeni tribes, who were robbed of their commanding position in the government. They rose in revolt. First of all, a rising occurred at Hims. Merwan at once marched against Hims and suppressed the revolt. Then the Kalbi tribes around Damascus attacked the capital, but were defeated. Next a serious insurrection, led by Thabit bin No'aym, took place in Palestine. It was also suppressed and its leader executed. Finally, the Kalbi tribes in Tadmor, which was their centre, rose in revolt against the Caliph, but submitted when Merwan marched against them, Thus by his military skill and brisk movements, Merwan speedily crushed the Yemeni risings in Syria one by one. But, at Tadmor, a section of his army, led by Hisham's son, revolted against him and marched away to Iraq to join with the rebels there. This showed that even an Umayyad would join hands with the enemies of the reigning Umayyad Caliph.

Revolts in Iraq. While busy suppressing revolts in Syria, Merwan nearly lost Iraq. Two old enemies rose against him there, the Alides and the Kharijites.

(*i*) **Revolt of Ibn Muawiya.** So disturbed was the condition of the Umayyad Empire under Merwan that an obscure member of the Alides revolted against them in Kufa, and captured several provinces for a number of years. He was Abdullah bin Muawiya, a great grandson of Jafar, a brother of Hazrat Ali. He had come to Kufa with his brothers a few years before and was persuaded to stay in it. Many people in that fickle city, including mostly the supporters of Zayd bin Ali, who had revolted and was killed in Hisham's reign, the Mawali, the Kharijis and others, made Ibn Muawiya to revolt. At first he was successful. But soon he was deserted by the Kufans and had to flee towards Persia, where he became the lord of Faris, Ahwaz, and Kirman. Many adventurers, both Umayyad, Alide, Kharijis and others joined his shifting camp-capital. For three or four years he remained in possession of the Persian provinces. But he was later defeated by Ibn Hubayra, the new governor of Iraq and fled to Abu Muslim in Khurasan. The latter got him secretly murdered, lest he might become a rival to the rising power of the Abbasides. His capture of Persia, however, rendered great service to the rise of the Abbasides. It cut off Khurasan from Syria and prevented any help being sent from Iraq to the Umayyad governor, Nasr bin Sayyar, who was then fighting a losing war with the Khurasani

rebels of Abu Muslim.

(*ii*) **The Kharijite Revolts.** Hardly had Ibn Muawiya been driven out of Iraq when a new enemy rose in that province, namely, the Kharijites. As usual they burst upon Iraq with a speed that was their own. When, in the days of Abdul Malik, the Kharijis had been crushed in Iraq and Persia, they had retired into the deserts of Iraq and Arabia. The troubles of Merwan gave them another opportunity to fight against the hated Umayyads. Khariji rebellion began in North Iraq, where one of their Khalifas, named Zahhak of Banu Shayban had revolted. Taking advantage of Ibn Muawiya's rebellion, he marched upon Kufa and captured it and a greater part of Iraq, in 745. Merwan was then too busy suppressing Yemeni revolts in Syria to march against him. At last, having restored peace in Syria, he marched against the Khariji rebel, Zahhak and defeated and killed him in a battle near Kefertutha, between Harran and Nasibeen, in North Iraq, in September, 746. The remaining Khariji rebels were dispersed, while their Umayyad ally, Sulaiman bin Hisham fled to the Alide Ibn Muawiya in Persia. Though suppressed in Iraq, the Kharijis overran Hijaz, Yemen and Azerbaijan. In Hijaz, their leader, Abu Hamza had captured Medina, but the generals of the Caliph defeated him. Only Yemen remained in Khariji hands. Thus within one year, 745-46, the Kharijis were defeated everywhere and peace restored in Iraq and Hijaz. Nevertheless, they contributed their share to the impending downfall of the Umayyads. Their widespread revolts convinced the Abbaside pretender, Ibrahim bin Muhammad, that the time had come to deliver a mortal blow to the tottering empire of the Umayyads. With this purpose, he sent Abu Muslim to Khurasan with express instructions to raise the standard of revolt at an approporiate moment.

It was at this critical time that Merwan fell into a mood of complacent inactivity. Believing that his troubles were at an end, he retired to Harran, leaving his sons in control of Damascus and Syria. He made Yezid bin Umar bin Hubayra the governor of Iraq. However, he was misled by the lull. Within a year a new storm arose in the East which, like a whirlwind, swept him and his dynasty from the pages of history. It was the Abbaside revolution in Khurasan.

THE FINALE IN KHURASAN

Tribal and Feudal Politics in Khurasan : 747-50. Khurasan, the border province of the Umayyad Empire, had now become a storm-centre of tribal and feudal politics. Broadly speaking, four different kinds of struggles raged in this troubled province. Though in the semi-tribal and semi-feudal environment, these antogonistic parties

in these struggles were often criss-crossing each other, nevertheless, political rivalry was always distinctly expressed in four ways, *viz*:

1. the inter-tribal rivalry of the Tamimite and Yemenite Arab tribes;
2. Rivalry between the Arab tribes and the Khurasani Mawali;
3. The feudal clash between the Arab Settlers and the old Persian Dihqan class; and, finally,
4. the new revolutionary force of Abu Muslim's Abbaside "shia" or party, with its new alignment of tribal and feudal forces in Khurasan.

Arab Tribes in Khurasan and their Rivalries. The Umayyad Caliphate, which was basically a kingdom of the Arab tribes, was now in a chronic state of lawlessness and revolts, which, however, reached a breaking-point in Khurasan. In order to understand this critical situation, we shall have to trace, in brief, the history of the rivalries and internecine quarrels of the Arab tribes in this province from the very beginning.

Tribes in Khurasan. When Khurasan "was conquered in the reign of Hazrat Uthman by the Iraq tribes sent from Basra, they settled in it. Among them the Modarite tribes, *viz*, Banu Tamim, Ribab, Khuza'a and Qays, were in majority, while the Himyarite tribes, such as the Rabia, a branch of the great Banu Bakr, were in minority. Hence the government of the newly conquered province remained mainly in Tamimite hands. Khurasan remained a dependency of Basra, whose armies had subdued it, and its governors were usually appointed by the governors of Basra and Iraq. When Hajjaj appointed Muhallab as the governor of Khurasan, he brought his Yemani tribe, the Azad, in this province, which somewhat restored the balance of power between the Northern and Southern Arab tribes in it.

The partisan policy of the later Umayyad Caliphs to favour one or the other of the tribal groups further increased the rivalry of these tribes in Khurasan. They always quarrelled over such matters as the offices in the military or civil departments or the share in the Bayt-al-Mal, *ata'* or stipend of the Diwan. These benefits and honours were usually given to the men of that tribe or group to which the governor belonged. But Khurasan was not Arabia. It was not an isolated country. It lay on the borders of the empire, with hostile tribes and peoples around and inside it. The Arabs, who were here constantly disputing and fighting with the Turks, the Sughdians and the Iranians, employed the interval to cut each other's throats. Exposed as they were, to several external dangers, they still behaved with exactly the same lack of unity as before in

their old desert-home. These dangers did not unite them but incited them to evermore inter-tribal struggles and wars.

Struggle between Tamimite and Yamemite Arab Tribes. Hisham appointed Nasr bin Sayyar as the governor of Khurasan in 738 A. D. He belonged to a weak and neutral tribe, named Kinana, which however, leaned towards the Tamim or Modarite group. So with him the Tamimites came to power once again. Though more than seventy-five, Nasr was still full of energy. He was an able and vigorous administrator. But he came too late to do any good to the Umayyads. Their sun was now fast setting. Nasr even tried to reconcile the Modar (Tamim) and the Himyar (Azd and Rabia) but failed, for the Arab tribes in Khurasan were again too busy cutting each other's throats to listen to the counsels of reason or moderation. The murder of Walid II proved to be the match-stick which again lighted the fires of inter-tribal wars in Khurasan.

Khurasani Mawali. As we have explained above, many Persian inhabitants, feudal aristocrats, warriors and commoners, had accepted Islam and become the clients or *mawali* of the Arab tribes. There were many such Mawali in Khurasan also. They had, however, a number of grievances against the Umayyad rulers, especially with regard to taxes like jizya, and Kharaj, which were imposed on them when they were non-Muslims and landholders. But they were still forced to pay these taxes, though they were now Muslim warriors. Though Umar II freed them from these taxes, the Arab rulers afterwards continued to discriminate against them in the share in the war-booty and the ata' or pension from the Bayt al-Mal. Many Mawali, therefore, began to espouse the claims of the Ahl al-Bayt or the House of the Prophet and joined the "Shia" or party of Abu Muslim and became the "da'is" of the Abbasid propaganda, in order to overthrow the rule of the ungodly usurpers, as they now regarded the Umayyads.

Arab Settlers : a new class of feudalised Arab tribes: As we have explained above, the tribal feudalism of the Muqatila was an unstable phenomenon. It was always subjected to two contrary tendencies the muqatila tribes either regressed into tribalism as shown by the factionalism and lawless conduct of the Arab tribes in Khurasan, or they took to settled feudalism by acquiring lands and becoming feudal landholders, big or small. The latter tendency was manifested by some Arab tribesmen in Khurasan. At the end of the seventh cenutry A. D. or during the reigns of Abdul Malik and al-Walid I, several Arabs of the Muqatila in Khurasan left their military profession and acquired and settled on lands in various parts of the province, such as Merv, Tus, Talqan, Herat, Merv ar-Rud, etc. They came to known as the Arab Settlers. They

ceased to be a part of the Muqatila or warrior class of the Arabs. They bought lands from the local or Iranian landlords or took to trade and commerce. Thus they became an Arabian feudal class whose way of life was more Persian than Arab, as they became assimilated with the local Iranian population. However, they came into clash with the old Persian feudal class of the *Dihqans* or local landholders. The latter were left in possession of their ancestral lands by the Arab conquerors and were entrusted with the task of collecting jizya and karaj from their co-religionists, the Iranian landlords and peasants. The *dihqans*, however, imposed these taxes on the Arab Settlers more, though they claimed exemption from them on the ground that they were Muslims as well as Arabs. But no Umayyad ruler till Nasr bin Sayyar, in 739, removed their grievances, as we have said above. It, was, however, rather late. Many Arab Settlers remained disaffected against the Umayyad rulers and their tax-collectors and joined the Abbasid revolutionaries who had been then spreading their propaganda in various cities and villages of Khurasan. Many of them became the "da'is" (propagandists) and "naqibs" (leaders or organisers) of the Abbaside propaganda system.

The Last Scene of Inter-Tribal Wars in Umayyad Khurasan : 744-747 : After Walid's death, Nasr bin Sayyar at first refused to recognise the new caliph, Yezid III, but soon after he did so. The Caliph, however, died within six months of his accession and his brother, Ibrahim, was soon defeated by a new Umayyad claimant, Merwan II. Nasr supported him. But neither he nor Merwan II could be of much help to each other in their struggles against their enemies, because their line of communication or reinforcement was cut off by the Alide and Kharijite revolts in Iraq and Persia. These revolts clearly indicated that the Umayyad Caliphate was disintegrating everywhere, particularly in Khurasan. So the Yemenite tribes there, led by Juday al-Kirmani revolted in Merv in July, 744. Harith ibn Surayj, the Arab dissident, and champion of the Mawali, who had already fought against Asad al-Qasri and had fled to the land of the Turks beyond the borders of the Caliphate, also invaded Khurasan from across the Turkish borders. He made an alliance with al-Kirmani and they defeated Nasr and compelled him to withdraw from Merv to Nishapur, the western capital of Khurasan. Soon ofter their victory, however, the two allies quarrelled with each other. In the renewed fighting, al-Kirmani killed Harith, and became the sole master of Merv. At this time, another enemy of the Umayyads, the Abbasid pretender, Ibrahim, noticing the explosive situation in Khurasan, despatched his trusted agent, Abu Muslim, to Khurasan with instructions to raise the standard of revolt at an appropriate moment. With his acute understanding of the critical situation of this troubled province, Abu Muslim realized that Juday al-Kirmani would be

his best ally against Nasr, the Umayyad governor. Realising the dangers of this alliance between the discontented Arabs and the inveterate enemy of the Umayyads like Abu Muslim, Nasr got Juday al-Kirmani murdered by Harith's son. But his place was soon taken by his son, Ali al-Kirmani. Nasr then marched on Merv to crush the younger al-Kirmani. When the two antagonists, Nasr and al-Kirmani, were encamped outside Merv in battle formation, to their surprise, a new enemy, Abu Muslim and his followers, suddenly appeared on the scene. With their appearance began the downfall of the Umayyad Caliphate.

4. Abbaside Revolutionaries in Khurasan : Abu Muslim and his followers : We have described the Abbaside movement in an earlier chapter. Here we shall deal with the Abbaside revolution which began in Khurasan and then spread over Persia, Iraq and other provinces and swept away the Umayyad Rule from the pages of history.

Ibrahim, the Imam of Banu Abbas and the Hashimiyya pretender to the caliphal throne, decided in 747 A. D., that the disintegrative conditions of the Umayyad Caliphate were ripe for a revolution in the East, particularly in Khurasan. He therefore, sent his able and trusted organiser, Abu Muslim al-Khurasani, to Khurasan, with the instructions to organise the Abbaside revolutionaries and raise the standard of revolt. In the early part of the year 747, Abu Muslim made a tour of Khurasan, visiting his "shia", *i.e.*, his supporters and partisans, in order to prepare them for the revolt.

Before we describe the events of the Abbaside revolt in Khurasan we should first see who were the supporters of Abu Muslim? From our analysis of the parties and forces in Khurasan on the eve of Abbaside revolution, given above, it would be obvious that these supporters came from the Mawali and Arab Settler groups and classes, primarily, and from the Iranian population in general, secondly. However, no unanimity of opinion exists about their exact composition both among the medieval Muslim historians and the modern historians of Islam.

Wellhausen, an old authority on the Umayyad history, says that "the majority of his (Abu Muslim's) adherents consisted of Iranian peasants and of the *mawali* of the villages of Merv, but there were Arabs among them also who mostly occupied leading positions."[1]

A later author, Bernard Lewis, analysing the Khurasani situa-

1. J. Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and its Fall*, p. 158

tion more precisely, writes, "an active and war-like Persian population, imbued with the religious aud military traditions of the frontier, was deeply resentful of the inequalities imposed by Umayyad rule. The Arab army and settlers, half Persianized by long residence, were sharply divided among themselves, and even during the triumphal progress of Abu Muslim diverted their own energies and those of Nasr ibn Sayyar to Arab inter-tribal strife."[1]

A contributor to the new edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, named Moscati, believes that "Abu Muslim gained support among the Yemenities".[2]

A recent author, M. A. Shaban, has however made a more accurate analysis of the forces responsible for Abbaside victory. He writes, "The truth of the matter is that, although there were some of the Mawali in Khurasan among Abu Muslim's followers, his main support came from Arab quarters in Merv, namely from the Arab Settlers. They were not only deprived of the advantages of being Arabs, but were treated even worse than the conquered people...After various experiments of the successive governors, these Settlers saw no hope except in a complete change not only in Khurasan but in the whole empire."[3]

By their deceptive propaganda for Banu Hashim or Hashimyyia's claim to caliphate and by such slogans as "*al-riza min aal* Muhammad" (the acceptable member from the people of the Prophet) who could be anyone else than the Abbaside Imam, Ibrahim, Abu Muslim had misled the Arab Settlers, Mawali and other discontented groups in Khurasan into believing that they were calling them to revolt against the usurping Umayyads in the name of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, *i.e.* the children of Fatima and Ali. Shaban writes that "the House of the Prophet had come to be identified in the minds of the Muslim masses, under the prevailing circumstances, with the cause of justice." That is the reason why all the Muslim peoples, with the exception of the ruling classes of the Arab tribes, whether they were the Mawali, the Kharaijis, the Shia'ites, moderate or extremist, the Pious groups of Medina, Kufa and Basra, actively or passively supported the Abbaside revolution. The martyrdom of the Shia'ite Imams in Iraq and Persia at the hands of the Umayyad rulers, from Imam Hussain at the hands of Yezid I to Abdullah ibn Muawiya at the hands of Merwan, and more recently, Yahya bin Zayd in Khurasan at the hands of Nasr bin Sayyar, had deeply grieved all the non-Umayyad

1. B. Lewis, "*Abbasids*", *Encyclopedia of Islam*. New Edition.
2. Moscati, article on "Abu Muslim". *Ibid.*
3. M. A. Shaban, *The Abbasid Revolution*. p. 158.

groups, parties and classes among the Muslims or Quasi-Muslims in Khurasan as much as in the rest of the Umayyad Empire. Abu Muslim fully exploited these sentiments in Khurasan, while other Abbaside leaders, like Abu Salama in Kufa, did so in other provinces.

Victory of the new Feudal classes over the Umayyad Muqatila system : We conclude that the downfall of the Umayyads was brought about by the rise of the new fedual classes of the Arab Settlers in Khurasan, as well as in all other provinces of the Umayyad Empire. They were disaffected, and discontented with the endless factionalism, wars and quarrels of the Muqatila of the Arab tribes. As agrarian and commercial classes, they had adopted the peaceful ways of agriculture and trade, instead of making their living by receiving the stipends (*ata*') and taking part in the campaigns. In fact, they regarded the endless factionalism and quarrels of the Muqatila as "*fitna*" or misguided strife.[1]

The emergence of these new classes produced a gulf between the Umayyad rulers and their Muslim subjects, *i.e.* between the old tribal feudalism of the Arab tribes, on whom the Umayyads depended and the new feudal and commercial classes. This social, economic and political gulf between the rulers and the ruled created a revoltionary situation in Khurasan as well in all the provinces of the Umayyad Empire especially in Iraq and Syria, where the power of the Umayyads really lay. In fact, without their support, the Abbasid victory in Khurasan alone would have been easily contained and crushed by the Umayyads and their Muqatilas of Syria and Iraq. In other words, the Umayyad rulers had failed to integrate all the Muslim classes, the old and arrogant Arab tribes and *ashrāf* or aristocrats, on the one hand, and the new feudal and commercial groups and classes, on the other, and thus produce a Muslim community in which there would be no distinction of the Arab or Persian, master or Mawali. This was, however, the aim of the Abbasid revolutionaries. Indeed, the very first act of Abu Muslim in Khurasan, after his initial success, was to create such an integrated Muslim community. M. A. Shaban writes :

"In less than a month and a half the number of Abu Muslim's army rose to 7000, whom he ordered to be listed in a new *diwan* according to their names, their fathers' names and their villages. This was a clear indication that they were all becoming Khurasaniyya, without any distinction as to their tribes or their Arab or non-Arab origin. In other words, complete assimilation was achieved in Khurasan, but this was expressed first in Abu Muslim's

1. M. A. Shaban, *The Abbasid Revolution*, p. 47, 96-97, *et passim.*

army, and subsequently imposed upon the rest of the empire by force of arms after the success of their Revolution in Merv."[1]

We now describe the events of this Revolution.

The D-Day of the Abbaside Revolution in Merv : 15 June 747/1 Shawwall 129 A. H. When Abu Muslim's preparations for revolt were complete a day was fixed for raising the black standard of the Abbaside revolution. It was the First of Shawwal, 129 A. H./15th June, 747 A. D.[2]

So, on this D-day of the Abbaside revolt, the supporters and partisans of the Abbasides, mostly Arab Settlers and Mawali, gathered together under the black standard of Abu Muslim, sent by Ibrahim, in a Khuza'ite village near Merv. The zero hour for revolt was flashed to the neighbouring villages by beacon-fires lighted on the hill-tops. This was the beginning of the Abbaside revolt. A force of 2200 infantry and 56 horsemen was collected. A couple of weeks later, it repulsed a troop of horse sent against it by Nasr bin Sayyar. Soon Abu Muslim's force rose to 7000 men. Leaving Merv alone for the time being, where the Arab tribes were contending against each other, he sent troops against Herat and captured it. In Merv, however, the Yemeni leader al-Kirmani was murdered by a son of Harith bin Surayj. Abu Muslim persuaded the Yemeni group, now led to Ali al-Kirmani the son of their old leader, that this murder was the work of the Umayyad governor, Nasr, who had regained Merv. Upon this the combined forces of Abu Muslim and the Azd (Yemenites) of al-Kirmani marched upon Merv and drove out Nasr from there. He fled to Nishapur and Merv fell into Abu Muslim's hands. Nasr sent urgent appeals for help to the Caliph at Harran in letters full of foreboding consequences if the Abbaside challenge was not repulsed. In his letters he warned Merwan that if the revolt in Khurasan were not crushed, it would overwhelm the Umayyad dynasty with distruction and asked in anguish "Would that I know whether the House of Umayya is awake or asleep ?" But Merwan did not pay heed to his words for his hands were already too tied by the rebels nearer home and also because of a mood of inactivity into which he had then sunk. Nasr was left to his own resources. One thing however, Merwan did. He got Ibrahim arrested on the basis of a letter captured by his men, in which he had despatched instructions to Abu Muslim to murder all Arabs who fell into his hands. He was put to death. But before his arrest, he had nominated his younger brother, Abdu'l Abbas, as his successor and sent all his family to Kufa into hiding.

1. M. A. Shaban, *The Abbasid Revolution*, p. 158.

2. It is a date given by Tabari. Other medieval sources of Islamic history give other dates, such as 25th Ramazan, 129 A. H./7th June, 747, A. D.

Abu Muslim gave no peace to Nasr even in Nishapur. When an Abbaside force under Qahtaba approached Nishapur, he fled to Sarakhs in Persia, but died as a fugitive near Hamadan in November, 748. With his death, Umayyad power vanished from Khurasan. The Arab tribes at last realised their danger and patched up their quarrels. But it was too late. Abu Muslim was now the master of the whole of Khurasan. He had large forces and several able commanders, both Arabs and Persians, such as Qahtaba bin Shabib at-Tai and his son, Hasan and Abu Ayun, who were Arabs of Khurasan, and Khalid bin Bermak, the founder of the famous Bermaki family of Balkh, of Persian origin.

Advance towards Iraq. Having secured his position in Khurasan, Abu Muslim sent his generals against the fugitive Umayyads in Persia. Qahtaba was sent against Nasr, whom he defeated in a battle near Sarakhs. Nasr fled to Jurjan where the Umayyad governor did not help him. From there he fled towards Fars, but died soon after near Hamadan in November, 748. After this, Qahtaba rapidly advanced towards the west and captured the city of ar-Rai. In the meanwhile new forces under his son, Hasan, Abu Ayun and Khalid Bermaki, joined him and they advanced towards Nihawand, in western Persia. Two Umayyad forces, one under Abdullah, a son of Merwan, and the other under Yezid bin Umar, the Viceroy of Iraq, were marching against Nihawand. But Qahtaba defeated them both. Abdullah retired towards North Iraq. Abu Ayun was sent against him. Qahtaba himself advanced toward Kufa in pursuit of Yezid bin Umar. The two forces again fought a battle on the banks of the Euphrates near Kufa, in which the Umayyads were again defeated. Yezid fled towards Wasit, in Lower Iraq, where he resisted the Abbasides for a long time. Qahtaba died while crossing the Euphrates, but his son, Hasan, who succeeded to his command, took Kufa without any resistance.

As-Saffa proclaimed as first Abbaside Caliph : Nov., 749. While these events were happening in the East, Merwan at last shook off his inactivity and took action against his mortal enemies. He got Ibrahim arrested from Humayma, because his spies informed him that he was behind Abu Muslim's revolt. Ibrahim was shut up in the prison at Harran along with other Umayyad princes who had opposed Merwan. Later, when things became very critical, Ibrahim was put to death. But before his arrest, he had nominated his younger brother, Abu'l Abbas, as his successor. He and other brothers and relatives of Abu'l Abbas, fled to Kufa, which was an important centre of Abbaside partisans. They hid themselves in the city under the protection and supervision of Abu Salama, who was in charge of the Abbaside secret organisation in Kufa. Abu Salama then assumed the title of "*Wazir aal Muhammad*", that is, the supreme director of the affairs of the

People of the Prophet, a sort of provisional head of the revolutionary government-in-the-making. As such, he assumed the responsibility to find some one among the People of the Prophet to become the Head or *amir al-momineen* of the new Islamic State.

Search for *al-riza* (*rida*) to be the Head of the New Caliphate : As we have said above, the Abbaside revolutionaries had raised the black banner of revolt in the name of "*al-riza min aal Muhammad*" who should become the head of the state after the overthrow of the hated Umayyads. With the entry of the Khurasani army into Kufa, the time had come to choose "al-riza", *i.e.*, the acceptable member from the People of the Prophet. But, as it always happened in early Islam, there was no unanimity of opinion among the revolutionaries and their supporters, Shia and others, on such constitutional issues : who should be the new Head of Islamic State ? What should be his qualifications for this august office ? What should be his powers ? etc.

There were, broadly speaking, three groups : the Shia; leaders of the Khurasani army and Abu Salama.

The Shia group was on various grounds, split into two distinct sects, if not more, namely the moderate Alides and the *ghaliya* extremists. Whatever their other differences, both sects were of the opinion that the Head of the Islamic State must at once be *Imam and Amir al-Mominin*, *i. e.*, he must exercise both religious and secular powers without any restriction or limitation, in all matters of religion and state, for, being a descendant of Ali and Fatima, he had inherited superhuman knowledge of all religious and secular affairs. Hence no restriction or limitation could be placed on his authority or power to rule the Muslim state and community. But neither Abu Salama nor the Khurasani leaders were ready to accept such a dictatorial *Imam* and *Amir al-Mominin*.

Abu Salama, the *wazir* of the Family of the Prophet, as he called himself, believed that the *amir al-mominin* should exercise limited sovereignty only in secular affairs, but none in religious matters. Even this limited power the *amir al-mominin* was to exercise with the advice and counsel of the 'wazir aal Muhammad", *i. e.* Abu Salama himself. So his ideal of an Islamic state was a sort of constitutional monarchy with limited authority. As 'wazir' Abu Salama had to select the generally "acceptable member of the House of the Prophet" to become the *amir al-mominin*. Besides the Abbaside Imam, Abu'l Abbas Abdullah ibn Mohammad, there were then three other prominent members of the People of the Prophet, namely Jafar as-Sadiq, Abdullah ibn al-Hasan and Umar ibn Ali ibn al-Hasan. When approached by Abu Salama to become the head of the new Islamic state with limited powers, no one among them was ready to accept his offer.

At this stage, the leaders of the Khurasani army in Kufa became active. Like Abu Salama, these leaders envisaged an Amir al-Mominin with very limited religious but no secular powers. They had allowed Abu Salama to select a "member" from the Family of the Prophet for over two months. When none was forthcoming, they compelled him to accept the Abbasid candidate, Abu'l Abbas, for the office of the Amir al-Mominin. Abu'l Abbas, on his part, was more than happy to accept it on the terms of the Khurasaniyya leaders, and was, further, ready to accept Abu Salama to continue to be the "wazir", even though it meant further limitation of his authority. So, at last, on these conditions, Abu'l Abbas was proclaimed as the first Caliph of the new Islamic State, the Abbasid Caliphate on the 25th of November, 748 A. D./ 12 Rabial Thani, 130 A.H., in the central mosque of Kufa. Thus by deception and double-talk, the Abbaside pretender had become the founder of the Abbaside dynasty, which ruled the destinies of Medieval Islam for five long centuries, amidst all the vicissitudes of sovereignty and splendour, pageantry and misery, decadence and disintegration.

Battle of the Zab : Jan., 750. Abu Ayun defeated Abdullah. Upon this Merwan decided to leave Harran and march against the advancing Abbaside forces. He had nearly 1,20,000 men under him, but most of them were disloyal towards him. In the meanwhile, Abu Muslim, who was directing the movements of the Abbaside armies from Khurasan, sent Abdullah bin Ali, an uncle of as-Saffa, with Khurasani troops to the help of Abu Ayun. The two forces met in North Iraq on the banks of the Zab, a tributory of the Tigris, flowing near Mosul. Though the Abbaside army was heavily outnumbered by Merwan's huge force, but it possessed greater unity, discipline and loyalty towards its commanders, while Merwan's Syrian troops felt no loyalty towards him and had no heart in his cause. "The legions of Saffah, clothed in black from head to foot, with standards, horses and camels all draped in black, marching up silently and in serried ranks like funeral mutes, must have struck the Syrians with awe." When fighting began, Merwan at first had the upper hand. But soon his Syrians were put to a headlong flight by the fierce onslaught of the hardy mountaineers of Khurasan. He called upon the Syrian tribes by name to rally around him, but to no avail. His huge army had tottered to pieces and fled from the battlefield only to be drowned in the river or pursued to death by the relentless Khurasanis. This was the end of the Umayyads. The Battle was fought on the 25th January, 750/11, vi. 132 A. H.

Death of Merwan : Aug. 750. Fleeing from the battlefield Merwan first turned towards his beloved Harran, but found its gates shut upon him. He then went to Hims and from there to

Damascus. But Abdullah bin Ali and Abu Ayun were hard on his heels. The Syrians did not rise in his support. So, he fled towards Palestine and from there to Egypt, hotly pursued by the relentless Abu Ayun. At last, in August, 750 A. D., tracked down into a church by Abu Ayun, Merwan and his small band of faithful followers, died fighting against their pursuers. Thus perished the last of the Umayyads. He was not so bad a man as to deserve such a tragic end.

The End of the Umayyad Caliphate : Thus perished the Umayyad dynasty. It also did not deserve, such a cruel fate : it had built the largest empire—a tri-continental empire—Islam was to ever know.

A Review of Merwan's reign. As a soldier and caliph, Merwan demonstrated some remarkable qualities. Though at the time of accession he was more than sixty years of age, he still possessed soldierly qualities of prompt action, vigour, great powers of endurance, physical strength and bravery. "He was," writes Muir, "one of the bravest and best of his house, and deserved a better fate." In spite of this, he met a tragic end, as Ibn al-Athir says, not because destiny had put an end on his reign, but because he had some personal shortcomings, such as his Modarite partisanship, his harsh and even cruel treatment of the Yemenites, his indolence and indifference to the dangers and problems which confronted him in the last critical days of his reign, and also due to the disintegration of the whole Umayyad system of Arabism and secularism, based on the exploitation of the subject non-Arab peoples, whether Muslims or non-Muslims. There was a general reaction against the secularism of the Umayyads and in favour of the Sovereignty of the Ahl-ul Bayt, of which the Abbasides took advantage under the guise of restoring the rights of Banu Hashim to the Headship of Islam. The final blow to the Umayyad Caliphate was delivered by the defection of the Syrian tribes, especially the Yemeni tribes, the Banu Kelb.

CHAPTER 45

CAUSES OF THE DOWNFALL OF THE UMAYYADS

We have traced the events which led to the downfall of the House of Umayya. We shall now describe the causes of its downfall.

Umayyad Caliphs: their weaknesses and faults. Fourteen Caliphs of the Umayyad dynasty ruled the Empire. Only a few of them were capable and great rulers, especially those who came in the beginning of their history, such as Muawiya and Abdul Malik. Most of them, especially those who came at the end, were generally worthless both as men and as rulers. Three of them, Sulaiman, Yezid II and Walid II, were profligates, given to the pleasures of wine. sex, music and hounds. Masudi records the opinion of an Umayyad prince who had held a high office under Merwan II in these words: "We gave to pleasure the time which it was our duty to devote to public affairs. Our ignorance of the public affairs and the events which were passing around us, was one of the principal causes of the fall of our empire." Like all ancient empires, the government of the Umayyad Caliphate was in the hands of one man, the caliph, who was the heart of the whole system. But when the heart become diseased, the body cannot remain healthy and vigorous. When the later Umayyad Caliphs neglected the affairs of the state for the pleasures of the harim, the whole administrative system of their vast empire began to crumble to pieces. The growth of such vicious institutions as the harim system, filled with several wives and many slave-girls, and guarded by the eunuchs, caused the Umayyad caliphs, court and nobility to degenerate. Several caliphs and princes of the later period were the sons of slave-girls, such as Maslamah bin Abdul Malik, Yezid III and Merwan II. Of all the forms of slavery, the slavery of the women is the worst, for it destroys the institution of family, which is the basic guarantee of the social and cultural continuity and progress of a people. The later Umayyads, both caliphs, princes and nobles, had destroyed the family system when they indulged in the pleasures of harims and slave-girls.

Umayyad Administrative System. The administrative system of the Umayyads, especially after Sulaiman's reign, became weak and inefficient. Muawiya had made the caliphate a hereditary institution. But there was no well-established law of succession among the Umayyads. The law of primogeniture was unknown to them.

On the contrary, they followed the ancient Arab tribal custom that the succession to the throne should go by seniority in age: the eldest member of the family would succeed, whether he was the son, brother, cousin or nephew of the preceding caliph. This was in itself a disturbing factor, for it led to intrigues when the reigning caliph was dead or dying. For example, the persecution of Hajjaj's family during Sulaiman's reign was the consequence of Hajjaj's attempt to prevent his succession. Another element of confusion was the practice of the Merwanids to nominate not one but two members of their family as their successors. This increased intrigues and rivalry between the two heirs-apparent and their supporters and caused dissensions and instability of the Umayyad dynasty.

Ill-treatment of Generals and Governors. The later Umayyads were a thankless race. They insulted, ill-treated and even put to death their generals who won laurels for them. They also illtreated their administrators and governors when they fell from grace. Sulaiman was responsible for the death of Qutayba and Muhammad bin Qasim and for the disgrace and obscure death of Musa and Tariq. Yezid II persecuted and extirpated the family of Muhallabids, for all their loyal services to the Umayyad dynasty. Hisham dismissed his governors, like Khalid al-Qasri, on flimsy grounds, although they had served him well for several years. It became a common practice among the Caliphs to hand over a governor on his dismissal to the tender mercies of his successor who often tortured him to death on the pretext of extorting state-moneys allegedly embezzled by him. The new governor dismissed the officials and men of his predecessor and tortured them for extorting money out of them. All this caused chaos and weakness in the administration and resentment among the tribes to whom the displaced governors and officials belonged.

Arab Tribes: their rivalry and feuds. Umayyads Caliphate was really an Arab Kingdom, as Wellhausen has described it. It was a government of the Arabs, by the Arabs and for the Arabs. It was founded on the loyalty and support of the Arabian tribes, who had conquered and colonised the various provinces of the early Muslim Empire. But it was precarious foundation, for the Arabian tribes gradually regressed into the pre-Islamic rivalries and feuds of the Jahiliyah period.

The teachings of the Holy Prophet and Islam were, on the whole, against the tribalism of the pre-Islamic Arabia. In place of tribal relationship, loyalty and pride, which the Arabs called "asabiya", Islam had emphasised allegiance and loyalty to Muslim 'umma'. Bonds of tribal affinity were to be replaced by the religious bonds of Islamic community. But this social transforma-

tion of Arabian society was only partially effected, and the basic features of the pre-Islamic tribalism remained unchanged. However, the old Arab tribalism remained submerged under the new and wider bonds of loyalty and service to Islam and Islamic community during the life time of the Holy Prophet and the first two Orthodox Caliphs. At the end of the Orthodox Caliphate several factors contributed to the resurgence of the old Arab tribalism in many ways, such as the tribal organisation of the early Muslim armies, the colonisation of the conquered provinces on tribal basis, and even the settlement of the new garrison cities like Kufa, Basra, and Fustat, on tribal lines dividing the quarters of one tribe from those of the others. Thus the Arab tribes carried their old tribal relations, attitudes and habits to new lands beyond the frontiers of their ancient land.

The Arab tribes had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing, although they had become masters of a vast empire from Sind to Spain. Wherever they went and settled, they carried with them their tribal "asabiyah", that is, their likes and dislikes, prejudices and disputes, dissensions and disunity which they had acquired in the deserts of pre-Islamic Arabia. They fought the wars of Jahiliyah, the "Ayyam al Araba", on the vast scale of the Umayyad Empire. But with one great difference. What was a petty affair in the isolated pre-Islamic Arabia now became a global affair of a vast Empire in which several other powerful parties were as much interested as the quarrelsome Arab tribes, such as the Christians of the Byzantium or Western Europe, the Turks of Central Asia and the various opposition parties inside the Empire. To all this the Arab tribes were sublimely oblivious and the Umayyad Caliphs and administrators supinely indifferent. As a European writer puts it: "Conquerors of Asia, of Northern Africa, of Spain, the Arabs never rose to the level of their position. Greatness had been thrust upon them, but in the midst of their grandeur they retained in all their previous force and intensity the passions, the rivalries, the petty jealousies of the desert. They merely fought again on a wider field the battle of the Arabs before Islam."

Two great Tribal Groupings: Ancient traditions among the Arabs made them believe that they were the descendents of two racial stocks, *viz.*, the Northern Arabs, the descendants of Modar, and the Southern Arabs, the descendants of Himyar. This geneological descent might well be a myth but was unquestioningly accepted by the Arabs. Traditions of the Jahiliyah period also told of unending antagonism and feuds between the two divisions of the Arab tribes, though these traditions were exaggerated, if not totally false. Whether false or not, these traditions of tribal rivalries and feuds were accepted by the Umayyad Arabs. They were motivated by them accordingly. The conditions of their

colonisation and settlement in the newly-founded towns and districts aided and ignited these inter-tribal jealousies and hostilities all the more, but on the basis of wider groupings and on vaster scale. Unlike the indiscriminate melee of the Jahiliya Arabs, the Arab tribes of the Umayyad period were polarised into two tribal groupings or "leagues" of the Modars and Himyars. On this basis, they fought their inter-tribal disputes from one end of the Empire to the other. These tribal groupings were differently formed in different provinces and were differently called, but the confederating tribes usually belonged to one of the two original stocks of the Modars and the Himyars. In Syria, the two rival groups were called the Qays (Modar) and the Kelb (Himyar or the Yemeni grouping), in Iraq the Temim (Modar) and the Bakr (Himyar), in Khurasan the Azd and Rabia (Himyar) and the Temim and Qays (Modar). Even the weak and neutral tribes were gradually drawn into the vortex of this polarisation of the Arab tribes, as for instance, the Bahila allied itself to the Yemeni grouping, while Kinana to the Modarite one.

Umayyad Caliphs Treatment of the Arab Tribes. The Umayyad Caliphs were mainly, if not exclusively, responsible for this regression of the Arabs into the tribalism of pre-Islamic Arabia. They encouraged the revival of their tribal spirit in one way or another. They chose their governors, amils and other officials on tribal considerations. They conferred fiefs, gifts and honours on tribal chiefs and leaders, and filled their courts with them. Thus the Umayyads rose to power on the strong wave of tribal spirit and loyalty of the Arabs. But, in the long run, it cost them heavily, for the Arabian tribes were divided and antagonistic to each other. The rise and fall of the Umayyad Empire was really a story of the rise and fall of an Arab Kingdom and a commentary upon the tribalism of the early Arabs.

Tribal Policy of the Umayyad. The early Umayyad Caliphs, from Muawiya to Walid I, were wise enough to hold the balance between the two rival groupings, and treated them equally and fairly in respect of governmental employment and favours. They did not allow one tribe to oppress the other, even though they were inclined more to the one than to the other. For instance, Muawiya and Abdul Malik were inclined towards the Kelbi (Yemeni) tribes in Syria. This policy was discarded by the later Umayyad Caliphs from Sulaiman onwards. Sulaiman favoured the Yemeni group and actively persecuted the Modarites; his brother Yezid II favoured the Modarites and persecuted the Himyarites; Hisham was inclined towards the Yemenites; Walid II towards the Modarites; Yezid III came to power with the support of the Yemeni tribes of Syria; and Merwan II with that of Modarites.

Thus the later Umayyads had discarded their neutrality and became active partisans of one tribal grouping and the persecutors of its rivals. But their favouritism kindled the fires of tribal jaelousies and feuds all over the Empire. The Caliphate itself degenerated into a party government of one tribal group as against the other with all the consequences of this partisanship. Every new Caliph dismissed the governors and commanders of the rival party and handed them to be tortured, even to death, by his favourites. The governors in their turn similarly removed their subordinates of the rival tribes and tortured and persecuted them on true or false charges. These changes not only caused administrative chaos, but also kindled the tribal jealousies and feuds, for the losing party often fought for its rights and interests rather than to submit to it quietly. So the Umayyad Caliphs themselves descended into the inter-tribal melee. However, these tribal feuds and quarrels were always unending and undecided. Sometimes the Modars got the upper hand and at other times the Himyar. However, these shifts in power and influence weakened the Arab tribes and thereby weakened the Umayyad Empire which depended mainly upon the strength and unity of the Arab tribes. The Arab tribes were now fighting not in the isolated desert of Arabia but in the midst of vast population of the non-Arabs whom they had denied rights and privileges and who, therefore, hated these ever-quarrelling yet arrogant Arabs and their Umayyad overlords. Moreover, the defeated tribes, especially the Himyarites, turned towards the enemies of the Umayyads, such as the Shia propagandists of the Ahl al Bayt. At last, their bloody drama had its finale, as we have described above, in the north-eastern province of Khurasan. The Umayyad Caliphate finally destroyed by the triangular war of the Arabs, the Mawali and the Shia supporters of the Abbasides.

Opposition Parties. Umayyad Caliphate was bitterly opposed by several factions and parties from its very inception due to its secular or non-religious character and its pro-Arab leaning. The number of its adversaries increased as time passed. They were the Kharijis, the Shia, the Pietists, the Mawali and lastly the Abbasides. We have traced the causes of their opposition in details elsewhere. Here it is enough to say that the Kharijis and the Pietists opposed the Umayyad rule on religious and theocratic grounds, and the Mawali on racial or national grounds. But all of them fiercely crititised the Umayyads for their ungodly and un-Islamic behaviour and government, secretly conspired against them and openly revolted whenever and wherever they got an opportunity, for which the secular character of the Umayyad rule and the endless inter-tribal feuds of the Arabs gave them a vast scope. To the devout pretists, the fanatical Kharijis,

the zealous Shias, the calendistine Abbasides, and the resentful but ever-increasing Mawali, the Umayyads and their Arab administrators were nothing but impious, greedy and arrogant imposters who had no right to the sovereignty of Islam.

Other Causes. Several other forces were silent but inevitably undermining the strength and stability of the Umayyad rule from the very outset. They were, briefiy, the hostility of the Iraqi tribes who always regarded the Umayyads as the alien rulers of Syria; the non-Muslim Dhimmis such as the Syrian Christians, the Egyptian Copts, and the Persian Zorastarians; the foreign enemies of the Muslim Empire, such as the Turkish hordes in the north, the Byzantines in the near West and the Franks in the Far West and the tribes of North Africa; and the financial policy of Umar bin Abdul Aziz.

To conclude in the words of the Umayyad, prince, reported by Masudi, "We gave to pleasure the time which it was our duty to dovote to public affairs; the heavy burdens we imposed on the people alienated them from our rule; harassed by vexatious imposts and despairing of redress, they prayed for deliverance from us; our domains became uncultivated and our treasuries empty; we trusted our ministers, they sacrificed our interests to their selfish aims and ambitions, and conducted the administration without our participation and our knowledge. The army, whose pay was always in arrear, sided with the enemy in the hour of danger; and our allies failed us when we needed them most. But our ignorance of the public affairs and the events which were passing around us, was one of the principal causes of the fall of our Empire."

CHAPTER 46

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF THE UMAYYADS

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The peoples of the ancient East, including the Arabs, were mere novices in political organisation and practice. The same was true of early Islam. Though religiously perfect it was politically and socially simple and rudimentary. It did not possess any coherent and organised system of the fundamental laws of the state structure, called a constitution. The evolution of the institution of caliphate was determined more by accident than by fore-thought or theory of the state. The Orthodox Caliphate was an elective and republican institution suitable for its tribalistic, patriarchal and paternalistic environment. But even then it lacked well-known and universally accepted rules regarding the election of a caliph or of its republican structure. There were only a few general principles of consulation by the head of the state which led to the growth of a rudimentary consultive system called the Shura. There were a few rules regarding the duties and qualifications of the ruler and his advisers, but they were mainly contractual and personal in nature.

The absence of definite and fixed laws and principles of state-structure was the chief reason why the Orthodox Caliphate lasted only for thirty years and was easily subverted by Muawiya and his Umayyad descendants. They gave the early caliphate a hereditary and monarchical form, which it retained throughout the subsequent ages of Islamic History. Outwardly the old forms and functions of the caliphal office were preserved unchanged, but in reality they became more like the monarchies of old Persia or Rome than like the Orthodox Caliphate. These changes were shown in several ways, viz., the succession and position of a caliph, his person and his court, his revenue system and administrative policy.

Structure of the Umayyad Central Government. The central government of the Umayyad Caliph consisted of (*i*) the Khalifa, (*ii*) his court, and (*iii*) five central departments or 'Diwans.'

THE KHALIFA

The Umayyad Caliphate, like that of the Orthodox, was headed by a Khalifa or Caliph, also known as the Imam or the Ameer ul Momineen.

Nomination. Muawiya nominated his son Yezid, as his successor. This became a precedent for all his Umayyad successors. They nominated their successors from their own family or clan during their lifetime. In this way succession to the caliphate was confined to the Umayyad dynasty, and thereby became a hereditary institution like a monarchy. But the outward pretence of election was still preserved, for the courtiers, grandees of the empire and other leading personalities in the capital and tribes took the oath of allegiance or *bayt* at the hand of the presumptive caliph at the time of his accession and the governors did the same on his behalf in the provincial towns. "Once the oath was taken," writes Ameer Ali, "the suffrage of the people, however obtained, whether by coercion, cajolery, or bribe, was supposed to give a sacramental character to the election." The Umayyad caliph nominated as his successor not necessarily his son, but any leading member of his family, such as a brother, cousin or nephew. The later Umayyads often nominated two successors, which became a source of trouble as it caused dissensions, with consequent disunity and weakness of the Umayyad caliphate.

Position. The Umayyad Caliph occupied the same position and performed similar functions as did an Orthodox Caliph but with a different attitude and spirit. He was the Imam or spiritual Head of Islam, the Ameer ul Momineen or the supreme commander and the supreme judge. Most of the Umayyad Caliphs led the public prayers in the central Mosque of Damascus, read the Friday Khutba and adjudged disputes brought before them after the afternoon prayers in the courtyard of the Mosque.

In actual practice, however, the Umayyad Caliphs were quite unlike their Orthodox predecessors. They were autocrats, with the solitary exception of Umar bin Abdul Aziz. They held themselves responsible to neither religion nor public opinion nor to a Shura, but were guided either by their own reason and judgment or by whims and passions of the moment. They appointed and dismissed civil and military officials of the provinces and sometimes even the lesser ones. These officials were responsible to the Caliph alone, to whom they looked for all favours. They treated the Bayt al-Mal or public treasury as their private property, spent public moneys on theirs own person or lavished them on their courtiers and favourites. Unlike the Orthodox Caliphs, they were inaccessible to their common subjects and kept themselves aloof, even in the Mosque where they ensconced themselves in a stone enclosure, called Maqsurah. In short, paternalistic absolutism was the chief characteristic of the Umayyad Caliphate.

The Court. With the rise of the Umayyads to power the Shura of the Qrthodox days ceased to exist. It had really vanished in the

reign of Hazrat Uthman. Under the Umayyads, its place was taken by the Court, which comprised the members of the Umayyad clan, their supporters, big landlords and other leading men of the Arab towns and tribes. Only during his brief reign, Umar bin Abdul Aziz re-instituted the consultative system of the Shura both at Medina, when he was its governor and at Damascus when he became Caliph. But his Shura was really the imperial court, filled with learned theologians and divines whom he consulted on matters of law and policy.

The life and work in the court varied with the character, habits or whims of the reigning caliph. Great Umayyad Caliphs, like Muawiyah or Abdul Malik, organised their courts for the despatch of the business of the state; pious Caliphs, like Umar II, made it a centre of religious discussions; the impious libertines, like Yezid II or his son Walid II, turned it into a centre of revelry and pleasure, while Merwan II's court was like a military camp. The Umayyad court was really patterned on the Byzantine model, with which the people of Syria were accustomed during the long rule of the Romans and the Greeks. In other words, the Umayyad Caliphate was a wordly government rather than a theocratic state of early Islam.

CENTRAL DIWANS

Five Departments of the Central Government. The organisation of the Central Government of the Umayyad, like that of the Orthodox Caliphs, was simple, even primitive. It consisted of five Departments, called "Diwans". Each Diwan was headed by one or more officials, called the *Katibs* or *Sahibs*. Their position was that of a secretary or a scribe and not that of a minister. They did not have an independent charge of their departments, but acted under the direct authority and supervision of the Caliph. They were really Caliph's servants, appointed or dismissed by him as he liked, and responsible solely to him for their work. The five Central Departments of the Umayyad Government were as described below:

1. *Diwan al-Kharaj or the Department of Land Revenue and Finance.* It was originally established by Hazrat Umar for the collection of land-revenue, but under the Umayyads, it also administered the entire finances of the State. It received all taxes, disbursed all expenses and maintained records of all receipts and payments. The surplus of the revenues of all provinces was paid into it, after meeting provincial charges and expenses. This Department also directly administered al-Sawad or the fertile region of the delta of Lower Iraq, where most of the lands were the personal property of the Umayyad Caliphs.

2. *Diwan al-Jund* was the military department, first established

by Hazrat Umar. It paid annual atā or pensions to the Arab and a few non-Arab Muslim soldiers in accordance with the Register or Diwan of Pensions. But the Umayyad Caliphs tampered with it by putting in the names of their favourites or changing the life-allowances of others as they liked. Indeed, the pension was paid not for the services to Islam but to the Umayyad rule. Moreover, as Dr. Hussaini says, Hisham even feudalised the Pension System of Umar I by making it compulsory for the pension-holder to tender military service on the battlefields of the Empire.

3. *Diwan ar-Rasail.* It was the Department of royal correspondence. It also existed since the days of the Pious Caliphs. It performed several functions. Besides the letters and orders of the Caliph, it also issued circulars and instructions to the provincial officials and subjects. It also co-ordinated the work of other Diwans. It was headed by a Katib or scribe who composed the letters and orders of the Caliph. The style of the royal correspondence was simple and direct under the early Umayyads, but became flowery and ornate under the later Umayyads. This style was later much elaborated by the Abbaside Katibs and writers.

4. *Diwan al-Khatim.* It was the Chancery of the Umayyads, first established by Muawiya to prevent forgery of royal correspondance. It was so called for it affixed the caliph's signet or 'khatim' to ryal orders and letters. A copy of them was entered in a register, while the original was sealed and despatched. The provincial governors had also similar departments.

5. *Diwan al Barid.* It was the Postal Department to transmit royal mail between the capital and the provinces. It was first set up by Muawiya, but was properly re-organised by Abdul Malik. For this purpose, postal stages at eighteen kilometres distance were set up all along the highways and roads leading from Damascus to the provinces. At each stage a relay of postal horses, with their tails cut-off, to distinguish them from other horses, (or camels in the deserts of Arabia) were kept to carry the mail from stage to stage. At first only the royal letters were transmitted by this Diwan, but later the letters of the ordinary subjects of the Caliph were also carried by it. Each province had an officer in charge of the provincial Post Office, called the *Sahib al Burid.* He was the post master.

PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Its distinctive features. Owing to the great expansion of the Muslim Empire under the Umayyads, it contained a greater number of provinces and other sub-divisions than in the earlier Orthodox Caliphate. The Umayyad Caliphate was divided into 114 pro-

vinces, some large and others small. They were further grouped into 5 viceroyalties for reasons of administrative control and communication.

As a matter of fact, provincial administration under the Umayyads possessed a great measure of local autonomy and self-government. Lack of speedy and effective means of communication and control from the remote capital made it necessary for the Caliphs to leave enough authority and discretion in the hands of the governors of the provinces so that they might deal with local affairs and dangers more promptly and properly.

This factor was also responsible for the growth of the three-tiered administrative system *viz.*, the viceroys in the five chief divisions of the Caliphate, the lesser governors in the smaller provinces and the subordinate officials in the districts. The viceroys possessed virtually the same powers and authority within their regions as the Caliph had for the whole Empire. The Caliph exercised general supervision, but granted much independence and authortty to the viceroys in administering their provinces in respect of appointing subordinate officials, etc.

Provincial divisions of the Umayyad Empire. There were three tiers of provincial divisions. First of all, the Caliphate was divided into five viceroyalties, called al-Iqleem. They were from east to west : Iraq, al-Jazirah, Arabia, Egypt and Ifriqia, with the home province of Syria which was directly administered by the Caliph.

Each of these viceroyalties was further sub-divided into lesser provinces, headed by a deputy governor under the supervision and control of the viceroy. (1) The province of Iraq consisted of several lesser provinces, *viz.*, Kufa, Basra and its dependencies of Persia, Bahrain, Oman, Kirman, Sistan, Sind, Kabul, Khurasan and Transoxiana. It was the second biggest province of the Umayyad Caliphate. At first it had two headquarters of Basra and Kufa. But during Abdul Malik's reign, when he appointed Hajjaj bin Yusuf as his victeroy of Iraq, it became a single province, with Wasit as its new headquarters. (2) Al-Jazirah comprised Mesopotamia or Upper Iraq, and the northern border provinces, Armenia, and Azerbaijan on the southern slopes of the Caucasus. The headquarters of this province were at Harran and Mosul. (3) Arabia comprised three provinces of Hijaz, the birth-place of Islam with its two Holy Cities of Medina and Mecca, Central Arabia and the Yemen. (4) The fourth major province was Egypt, which comprised Lower Egypt or the Delta and the Upper Egypt. Its headquarters were at Fustat. (5) Finally, the whole of North Africa, which the Arabs called *al-Ifriqiya* was the fifth viceroyalty in the west. It was one

of the biggest provinces of the Umayyad Empire, with its capital at Qayrowan. It comprised Ifriqiya proper, which is now called Tunisia, where the provincial capital was situated, al-Mughrib which is now called Algeria and Morocco, Spain and other outlying possessions of the Umayyad Empire, like Septamania in South France, and the Mediterranean islands of Sardinia, Majorca and other Balearic Islands, which, were conquered by the Umayyads in the days of Hisham.

Each of these lesser provinces were further divided into districts for purposes of revenue collection. The lesser provinces were administered by deputy governors, mostly appointed by and responsible to the viceroys or major governors of their provinces. The districts were administered by Amils, who were the district tax-collectors. Big towns in a province had sometimes their own Amils, appointed by the governor.

Provincial Officials. In the Middle Ages, the sphere of state-activities was confined mostly to four essential functions. They were : political administration, to preserve peace and order, revenue collection, police function of punishing the rebels and criminals, and the judicial function. Constructive or nation-building activities were generally unknown to the rulers and administrators of those times, except in the case of a few gifted or greedy ones. Though no hard and fast line of demarcation was made, the various Umayyad provincial officials performed one of these four categories of state-functions. The administrative officials were the Governors, the Katibs, the Sahib al Barid and the Amils ; the revenue officials were the Sahib al Kharaj, the Amils, etc., the police officers were the Sahib ash-Shurta and the Sahib al-Ahdath ; and the judicial officers were the Qazis. There were no separate and distinct army officials, for in those days no distinction existed between civil and military administration as such. Every military officer was a civil administrator, and *vice versa*. Hence a Governor was both a Wali and an Amir or military commander, while a district officer could act as a commander, a tax-collector and district administrator.

The Governor. The Governor, called Wali, was the head of the provincial administration. But as the provinces varied greatly in size and importance, the office of the Governors also differed in authority and importance. Though no definite rule or law distinguished the authority and powers of the various kinds of governors, there were, broadly speaking, two kinds of them : the Governors of the major provinces, whom we may designate as "Viceroys" or Chief Governors, and the Governors of the lesser provinces, called Governors or Deputy Governors. The Arabs called them Walis or Amirs. There was a semblance of distinc-

tion. The term "Wali" was mainly reserved for the Viceroys or the Governors of the major provinces, while the term "Amir" usually meant the Governors of the border provinces who were really military commanders, posted at the military frontiers of the Empire. Several Chief Governors of the Umayyad Caliphate were exceptionally talented, enterprising and energetic administrators and military leadery such as Ziyad bin Sumayya, Hajjaj bin Yusuf, Khalid al-Qasri, Uqba bin Nafe, Musa bin Nusayr, etc. Another distinction between them may be remarked here. The Viceroys of the East were usually men of great learning and culture. They were interested not only in firm administration but also in the arts of peace, such as agriculture, irrigational projects, etc. On the other hand, the Viceroys of the West at Qayrowan were always great military leaders and commanders. This was but necessary, because in those days, the lands of the East were great centres of learning, arts, industry and progress, while the land of the West, North Africa and Europe, were mostly inhabited by barbarous tribes and races.

Position and Functions of the Governors. The Governor of the provinces, especially of the major ones, performed the same functions and occupied the same position within their areas as the Caliph had at the Centre. They conducted public prayers, or made arrangements for the same. They commanded the armies of the provinces or appointed proper commanders. All provincial officers, with the exception of the provincial treasury officers, were appointed by them, such as the Sabib al Kharaj, the Katibs, etc., and were responsible to them. But sometimes the Caliph appointed these provincial officials, even against the nominees of the Chief Governors. This was particularly the case with the appointment of the deputy governors of the border provinces. The great administrators, like Ziyad bin Sumayya, Hajjaj and Khalid al-Qasri, possessed absolute powers during their tenure of office.

The chief function of the Walis was to maintain peace and order, suppress rebellions and punish the disturbers of peace and violators of law, especially in the provincial capitals and other important towns in the provinces. For this purpose, they maintained a police force, called *ash-Shurta* and a militia, called *al-Ahdath*. Besides their administrative duties, several Governors, like Hajjaj and Khalid al-Qasri, devoted their attention and energy to the improvement of agriculture, development of the provincial natural resources and to learning and arts. They drained marshes, reclaimed waste lands, dug canals, constructed roads, etc. Some of the later Umayyads appointed princes of the royal blood as governors. They did not go to their provincial headquarters but stayed back at Damascus and sent "Naibs" in their stead. This caused administrative weakness. The Governors also supervised the eollection of

of land-revenue and other taxes. But here again there was much confusion, for the financial duties were not clearly defined and fixed and also because some Governors misappopriated public funds, especially during the later part of the Umayyad period.

The Katib. Every Governor had his own secretary or scribe, called Katib. He acted as a sort of assistant governor, relieving the Governor of some administrative work. He was really an administrative and not an executive officer, for he acted on the instructions and orders of the Governor. When the administrative work increased at the end of the Umayyad period, several Katibs were appointed.

Sahib al-Kharaj. Next to the Governor, the most important provincial official was the Sahib al Kharaj, sometimes also known as the Amil. At the end of the Umayyad rule, when military conquests had ceased, and tax collection became more important administrative duty, the Amil also became more important than the lesser governor of his area. The Sahib al Kharaj collected land-tax or "kharaj", Jizya, Zakat and other taxes and presents, and paid all provincial expenses like the pensions, salaries, etc. Usually, he was responsible for his work to the Caliph and not to the provincial Governor, so that latter might not misappropriate state-revenues, as some of the Governors had done.

Sahib ash-Shurta. Police and penology were differently regarded in those days than in the modern times. Most of the crimes, like theft and murder, were regarded as matters to be punished by the chiefs of the tribes under the Law of Islam. The State intervened only in support of the tribal chiefs. But in towns the State punished the criminals and law-breakers as its own responsibility. For this purpose, a police force existed in the provincial capitals and important towns, calld ash-Shurta. It was in charge of a police chief, called Sahib ash-Shurta, who worked under the direct control of the Governor. Ziyad had created a Shurta force of 40,000 men in Kufa alone. His police officer, Ja'd bin Qays, kept a watch on the suspects. Muawiya registered the names of all suspects in the capital, Damascus.

Sahib al-Ahdath. In later part of the Umayyad rule, a para-military force was also created to preserve law and order in the country-side. It was called the Ahdath, commanded by an officer, called Sahib al Ahdath. It performed militia duties of suppressing rebellions or preventing them by policing the whole province. It stood, therefore, half-way between the police and regular army.

Sahib al-Burid. He was the provincial post-master. He controlled the department of Burid or Post Office in the province.

The Qazi. The Qazis or judges were first appointed in the days of Hazrat Umar. They settled disputes between Muslims according to Islamic Fiqh or jurisprudence. The Qazi's court was held in the mosque. Besides judicial duties, the Qazi also administered "Auqaf" or endowed lands and property. The non-Muslim Dhimmis had their own judges to settle their civil disputes according to their personal law.

Amil. He was the District Officer, entrusted witht he chief task of collecting taxes.

Provincial Departments. Each province had usually four Diwans or Departments. (1) *Diwan ar-Rusail* was the chief Department for official correspondence and for co-ordinating the work of other Departments. (2) *Diwan al Jund* administered military affairs of the province (3) *Diwan al Mustagillat* was the Financial Department of the province and kept records of provincial accounts, income and disbursement. (4) *Diwan al Burid* was the provincial Post Office.

REVENUE ADMINISTRATION OF THE UMAYYADS

Its distinctive features. The sources of revenue under the Umayyad Caliphs were much greater than in the days of the Orthodox Caliphs. It was partly due to the extension of the Empire and partly due to the imposition of more than the five traditional Islamic taxes. They imposed more taxes than Islam justified or on them whom early Islam had exempted. They treated the public treasury or Bayt al Mal as their private property and spent the public revenues on their personal pleasures or favourites.

Once Hazrat Umar, the Second Pious Caliph, asked Hazrat Salman Farsi, "Am I a king or a Caliph?" Salman replied, "If you have levied from the lands of the Muslims one dirham more or less and applied it unlawfully, you are a king, not a Caliph". Keeping this financial principle of Islam in view, the Umayyad Caliphs were really worldly monarchs and not Caliphs. This fact will be clear from a brief review of the kinds of taxes they levied and the manner in which they collected them.

Kinds of Taxes. Islam sanctioned five sources of revenue: Zakat from the Muslims, Ushr from Muslim land-owners, income from the Fay or crownland, Khums or one-fifth share of the State in the war-booty, Kharaj or land tax from non-Muslim land-owners and Jizya or poll-tax from the Dhimmis (Zimmis). Hazrat Umar I added one more, *viz.*, the Ushur on merchandise. But to this list, the Umayyads added several new ones, such as the tributes

under treaties, presents and gifts on festivals, child tribute on the Berber tribes, etc. Some of them created difficulties for the Umayyad tax-collectors and engendered hatred among the people against the Umayyad rule.

Kharaj. It was originally imposed by Hazrat Umar on all non-Muslim land-owners who were left in posession of their ancestral lands on the condition of paying to the Muslim State a tribute or Kharaj. Its amount varied from one-fourth to one-half of the produce of the land. During the Umayyad rule large multitudes of non-Muslims adopted Islam. According to the strict principle of Islam, they were now to pay Ushr for their lands and not Kharaj. But the Umayyad governors and Amils like Hajjaj, continued to collect Kharaj from them instead of the Ushr, for the income of the latter was much lower than that of the former. This created resentment in the hearts of the Mawali or the converts, with consequences we have described in previous chapters.

Jizya. It was a personal tax, imposed on the non-Muslims for their protection by the Muslim State and exemption from the military service. It varied from one dinar to four dinars or ten dirhams to to forty dirhams, depending upon the sources of income and wealth of the non-Muslims. When many Dhimmis adopted Islam, they claimed exemption from the payment of Jizya. But here again the Umayyad governors and tax-collectors continued to impose Jizya on the new converts or Mawali, which created resentment against their rule.

Child tribute. Owing to the increasing wealth and luxury of the Umayyad rulers and feudal grandees, the demand for slaves increased among them. When the Arab arms ceased to conquer new lands, the supply of slaves as captives of war came to an end. In order to meet this demand, the Umayyads imposted a child tribute upon the Berber tribes of North Africa. This tax was, however, morally detestable and reprehensible.

Various impost, tributes, presents and gifts were extorted by the Umayyad officials in the provinces, with or without the Caliph's knowledge or approval, particularly on the occasion of religious festivals and holidays, like the Persian Nauroz (the Persian New Year's day) and Mihrgan, the autumnal festival of the Zorastrians. These taxes were also unauthorised by Islam. However, they increased the financial burdens of the Umayyad subjects and produced resentment against their rule. Finally, all these taxes, etc., were not levied according to one standard, but varied from province to province.

Fiscal System. These taxes and tributes were collected by the

provincial revenue officials, with the aid of the native landlords and tax-collectors and deposited in the provincial Bayt al Mal. The provincial Sahib al-Kharaj supervised this work. From this fund were disbursed the provincial charges like the pensions and other remunerations of the soldiers, the salaries of the provincial officials, the expenses for constructing or maintaining roads, bridges, etc., in the province. After these disbursements whatever surplus remained was forwarded to the central treasury at Damascus.

MILITARY SYSTEM OF THE UMAYYADS

The military organisation of the Umayyads was different in several ways from that of the Orthodox Caliphs. The Umayyads had borrowed much from the Byzantines, such as in military equipment, weapons of siege, etc.

Number and pays of the soldier. As before military service was compulsory for all male Muslim population. The Umayyad armies had swollen to large numbers. In Muawiya's reign, Kufa had 60,000 and Basra 80,000 warriors. Yezid bin Muhallab-led a force of 100,000 men against Tabaristan, and Merwan led a huge force of 120,000 men to the fateful battle of the Zab. The pay of the soldiers also increased. According to Hazrat Umar's Diwan, an ordinary soldier was paid 300 to 600 dirhams a year. But in Muawiya's days his pay increased to 1,000 dirhams a year. The Caliphs paid special pay on special occasions. For instance, Yezid I paid 100 dinars to the Syrian troops when he sent them against Medina. Walid II increased the pay when he ascended the throne to win popularity, but Yezid III reduced it and earned the nick-name of *an-Naqis*, the retrencher. The horsemen received double the pay of the foot soldiers. The Iraqis were paid less than the Syrian troops, which was one of the standing complaints of the Iraqis against the Umayyad rulers, and a cause of their unending hostility towards them. On the whole. the vast army was a huge burden on the Umayyad exchequer. For instance, the Kufan army of 60,000 entailed a yearly expenditure of 6,00,00,000 dirhams, excluding the family stipends of the soldiers. This huge financial burden became one of the causes of the ultimate break-dawn of the Umayyad system.

Weapons and equipment. In respect of weapons and equipment also the Umayyad soldiers were far more lavishly furnished than their Orthodox forerunners. A foot soldier was equipped with lances, bows and arrows, javelins, double edged swords, a mace with iron knobs, battle-axes, a dagger, a long and a small shield. He wore a helmet and a shirt of mail or breast plates. A horsemen was similarly equiped with lances. bows and arrows, long, broad and straight swords and shields. He wore shirts of chain-mail.

The Umayyad armies were equipped with all the weapons of siege used by their enemies, the Byzantines. The heavy artillery was represented by three types of "*manjineeqs*" or ballistic machines for throwing stone-missiles on the walls of the forts,—the smaller ballista or "*arradah*", the larger catapults or '*manjiqneeqs*' and the battering-rams called "*dabbabah*". These huge weapons were transported on camels behind the army, or by boats. The only Byzantine weapon the Umayyads never acquired was the Greek-fire or Naphta, which played such a havoc in their ranks whenever they laid siege to the Greek capital, Constantinople.

Military Ranks. The Arabs had borrowed the Roman or Byzantine metric system of army organisation. The smallest army unit consisted of ten soldiers, called "*Ashrah*". It was commanded by a Decurion or *al-Areef* or *Ameer al Ashrah*. A squadron of 100 soldiers was commanded by a *Naib*. Ten squadrons of 1000 men was commanded by a *Qaid*. A corps of 10,000 soldiers under ten Qaids was commanded by an Ameer or General. An army of five corps formed the five divisions on the battlefield under a supreme commander.

Umayyad army comprised four different kinds of military forces: *viz*., the infantry, the cavalry, a service corps and a corps of engineers, called the *Naqqabeen*, who operated the siege-weapons. Besides this, there were also a few civil officers like the Qazi, the treasurer, the paymaster, the translators, etc. On the march, the army was preceded by a body of scouts for purposes of intelligence and reconaissance of the enemy movements and strength.

Tactics. The methods of warfare were mostly unchanged since the days of the Holy Prophet and even earlier. On the battlefield the army was arrayed in the traditional five divisions—the centre, two right and left flanks, the rear division and a vanguard in the front, with reserve behind which consisted usually of the horsemen. The troops were drawn out into lines, called the Sufuf. Later, Merwan II is said to have given up the line-formation and adopted the Roman system of columns or 'Kurdus'. At first the Umayyad armies were recruited on tribal basis. But the later Umayyads employed regular paid troops.

The Navy. The Umayyads made great advances in naval warfare. Their navy was virtually the mistress of the Mediterranean Sea. They had set up dockyards and ship-building factories in various ports on the coasts of the various Mediterranean islands. Muawiya was the first navy-builder of his dynasty, but it reached its zenith under Walid I. Besides the Mediterranean, the Umayyads had their fleets in the Indian Ocean. A naval fleet was commanded by an *Ameer al-Bahr* or admiral. The fighting unit in a fleet was a galley, on board of which were about 50 rowers and 100 armed marines.

CHAPTER 47

POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS PARTIES UNDER THE UMAYYADS

As religion in early Islam could not be separated from politics, every political dispute became a cause of religious dissension and led to the emergence of a new religious sect. Consequently, in early Islam every political party became or tended to become a religious sect. The disputes which divided them were at once political, social, moral and religious.

Politically, it was the question as to who could be a caliph and on what conditions ? It was the most important and the most controversial of all other questions, on which depended all other disputes. Socially, the dispute raged around the relations between the Arabs and the Mawali, etc. It was a problem of equality and social justice, in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Economically, the dispute was about the finances and taxes imposed by the Caliphs. Morally and religiously it raged about the question whether a man remained or not a Muslim if he committed a "greater sin" or the "Kabira", etc.

Out of these disputes, often fought with fire and sword among the Muslims, arose several political parties and sects among them. These parties opposed the Umayyad Rule on one ground or another. But on one common purpose, they were all united, *i.e.*, to overthrow the hated Umayyad yoke. Among them the most important parties were the Kharijis, the Shia-ites, the Pietists, the Mawali and the Abbasides. The lesser ones were the Murjites, the Mutazila and the Qadarites, whose influence did not become great during the Umayyad period, as it did later under the Abbasides.

KHARIJISM

History of the Khawarij. The first party to rise in revolt was that of the Kharijis (sing, Khariji, pl. Khawarij). They first rose in the troubled reign of Hazrat Ali. Though suppressed by Ali, and later by Muawiya, the Kharijis remained a source of endless troubles and revolts for all the Umayyad Caliphs and even under Abbaside Caliphs. The most important of their revolts were after the death of Yezid I, when the Second Civil War began. They revolted in Basra and Persia against Abdullah bin Zubayr and then against Abdul Malik. But they were finally suppressed by Hajjaj and Muhallab. Crushed in Iraq, many of them fled to

North Africa and spread their seditious sect among the Berbers and ultimately incited them to revolt against Hisham. Finally, the Kharijis revolted in Iraq and Arabia, when Merwan II ascended to the caliphate. Though suppressed, their revolt directly contributed to the speedy downfall of the Umayyads.

Khariji "Khalifas" and sects. Strange though it may appear, the Kharijis had their own "Khalifas", whose history runs parallel to that of the Umayyad Caliphs, with whom they were constantly at loggerheads. The Khariji "Khalifas", usually called "Ameer ul Momineen" by them, led the public prayers and commanded the army. The death of a "Khailifa" often heralded a quarrel among the Kharijis, which usually ended in the rise of a new sect among them. Thus in course of time, they came to be divided into as many as 20 sects.

The first of their Khalifas was Abdullah bin Wahb Rasibi, a Tamimite, who led them to the fateful Battle of Nahrawan against Hazrat Ali. The next important Khalifa was Nafe bin Azraq, who lived in the days of Muawiya, and died in a battle in 673. Being uncomprisingly fanatical, he believed that those Muslims who accepted Ali or Muawiya as caliph had become infidels and must be put to death along with their families. So, whenever his followers captured a Muslim, they mercilessly slaughtered him. Yet they treated the non-Muslim Christians and Jews more kindly, for, as they said, they were never Muslims at all. After his death, his followers formed the most fanatical and uncompromising sect of the Kharijis, called Azraqa after the name of their leader. Later, an equally fanatical Khariji, named Najda bin Amir, became their Khalifa. His followers also formed a new Khariji sect, called the Najdite. Then came a milder Khalifa, named Abdullah bin Ibad. His followers constituted a milder Kharijite sect, called Ibadiyya. The Ibadites held it lawful to mix with the Muslims on terms of mutual tolerance.

The troubled days of Hajjaj and Abdul Malik produced several intrepid leaders and warrior-Khalifas of the Kharijis. One of them was Saleh bin Misrah, who declared a holy war against Umayyad tyranny. Another was Shabib bin Yezid, a chief of the famous Banu Shayban of Bakr, who had migrated from Chaldea to new pastures in Northern Iraq or Mesopotamia. After the death of Saleh Shabib succeeded him and inflicted several defeats on the armies sent by Hajjaj against him. Once, to fulfil his wife's vow to pray in the central mosque of Kufa, he even captured this city in the teeth of Hajjaj's army and thus enabled his wife, Ghazalah, who was an equally ferocious warrior, to offer a short prayer and recite Quran in the Kufa mosque. The Shabibiyya sect of the Kharijis considered that even a woman could be elected Imam or

Khalifa. After several years of courageous struggle against Hajjaj, fortune then deserted Shabib. His wife and mother, both warriors, were killed. He was defeated and driven to South Iraq. While crossing the Dujayl near Ahwaz, he fell from his horse into the water and was drawn by his own heavy steel coat-of-mail in 697. At about the same time, the Kharijis in Persia had another Khalifa, named Qatari bin al-Fuja'a, who was an Azraqite. He quarrelled with other Khariji leader, Abderba al-Kabir, and departed to Tabaristan with his followers. Later both Abderba and Qatari were crushed and killed by Hajjaj's forces. Qatari was, however, a poet, whose verses, as Ibn Khallikan said, would make the greatest coward in the world into a brave man. After being suppressed in Iraq and Persia, the Kharijis emigrated to North Africa, where arose a new Khariji sect of the Suffarides who equalled the Azraqites of the East in violence and bigotry.

Finally, in Merwan II's reign, the Kharijis produced several more 'Khalifas', viz., Zahhak bin Qays of the Banu Shayban, the Dai-ul Haq in Arabia, etc. However, a change had come over these Kharijis. They were now fighting not for the purity of Islam but for its sovereignty. Like other opposition parties, they sought not to save their souls but to carve out a kingdom for themselves, and if possible, to capture worldly power.

Their names. The kharijis designated themelves as "Shurat" (sing. Shar), *i. e.* those "who have sold themselves, their lives and goods for the sake of Paradise". It was other Muslims who called them kharijis, because they "went away" or "seceded" from the Muslim community. In Arabic, the term 'khariji' is derived from "Kharaja", "he goes away". But this term might well mean "one who goes from his home among the unbelievers for God's sake", and would imply the same sense as "Muhajir", which is a similar derivative. The early Kharijis were also known as the "Harurites", after the village 'Harura', where they first separated themselves from Ali's army.

Who became Kharijis? First of all, the ranks of the Kharijis were recruited from the devout Muslims, especially from among the Quran-readers. This was particularly true of the original 12,000 Harurites who broke away from Ali's army. Shahrastani says that they were "people of fasting and prayer." They were the puritans and the theocrats of Islam, who dreamed of building a kingdom of God on the teachings of the Quran and on the model of the simple days of Abu Bakr and Umar. Along with them were the equally devout heroes of early Islamic conquests, the men who had won the battles of Qadisiya and others against the infidels. Later, they included many pious Muslims who were grieved by the growing impiety and

worldliness of the Umayyad Caliphs and their officials and feudal nobles, the ashrāf, as they were called.

Besides the devout Muslims, the Bedouin tribes, settled in Iraq and south Persia, such as the Tamim, Shayban, etc, also joined the Kharijis. The reason was that the Kharijis, like the Bedouins, hated a strong centralised government as the Umayyads had established. They dreamed of an anarchic democracy of the tribes, as it always existed in Arabia before the rise of Islam. When the Umayyad rule became oppressive and tyrannical, a new type of Arabs joined the Khariji ranks. They were those who hated political tryanny, taxes and wordly-minded officials. When the Kharijis said '*La Hukma*"—no arbitration—they meant "*La Imra*"—no government, as Hazrat Ali pointed out. Indeed the Kharijis were born rebels, revolutionaries and anarchists. But there was a third class of the Kharijis as well. They were all those who joined their ranks for plunder and other criminal motives. If the first two types of persons became Kharijis for reasons of religion or politics, the last class did so for criminal intentions of plunder and loot. They were the scum of the society who joined the Khariji ranks, for it was easier to plunder or murder under the garb of religiosity.

Kharaji Principles. Although the Khawarij had no basic unity in their beliefs and tenets, yet they had some principles in common which distinguished them from other Muslim peoples and parties These differences were political, religious, and moral but so mixed together that it is not easy to disentangle them.

Political principles of Kharijism. The basic issue which divided the early Muslims was the question of caliphate. It created various sects and parties among them, for each of them had its own beliefs and principles as to who could be a caliph and on what conditions. In this respect, the Kharijis were uncompromisingly democratic and equalitarian. First of all, they believed that every free Arab was elegible for caliphate. Here they differed from the Shias who believed that only a member of the Ahl al Bayt, the children of Ali and Fatima, had the right to caliphate. Later, the Kharijis believed that every Muslim, whether Arab or not, or even a Negro, could be elected caliph. In this respect they also differed from the general body of the Muslims who believed that only the members of the Quraysh tribe could become caliphs.

Secondly, they believed that a reigning caliph could be deposed, and if necessary slain, if he failed to satisfy the Muslim community either by his private conduct, public policy, or religious behaviour. That is the reason why they openly declared that

Uthman was rightly murdered for he showed the political misconduct or favouritism and nepotism and that Ali was no longer a claiph when he accepted arbitration and thereby interfered in the affairs of God. Indeed, they kept a close watch on their own Khalifas and often deposed and killed them if they made a false step or committed a sin. For this reason they often quarrelled among themselves and split up into several groups and sects.

Thirdly, the Kharijis were fanatical theocrats, who believed that there is "no rule but that of God"—*la hukam illa lillahi*. It meant that government or sovereignty resided only in God. They further held that God's will would be expressed by the arbitrament of war, that is, by the sword. In the days of Hazrat Ali, it was really a battle-cry against the deed of arbitration, but later it was raised to the level of a political belief and then into a religious dogma by them. It meant that in all matters in which Allah had clearly laid down rules and decisions in the Holy Book, no human being was to be a judge. Instead of it, all Muslims were to submit to God's judgment unquestioningly and to fight against those who disputed or rejected it. Such people were transgressors of the Divine Law and therefore rebels. In Islam, the punishment of such transgressors and rebels was the same which Abu Bakr had inflicted on the apostates and rebels in his days, *i. e.*, war till they were suppressed and extirpated. This was the reason for which the Kharijis revolted against Ali and against the Umayyad and Abbaside caliphs.

Fourthly, the Kharijis intended to set up a theocratic republic under a council of representatives, the Shura. Indeed, they elected a Khalifa only for leadership on the battlefied and for worship, and not for political leadership and rule. For this purpose they planned to establish a council of elders. This was the original plan of the 12,000 Harurites when they marched on al-Madain which they planned to turn into a theocratic city-state, ruled by a Shura. It was to be a model for other cities in the Muslim Empire to follow. Their political creed was succinctly expressed by them in the letter which they wrote to the governor of Madain, Simak bin Ubayd, when they marched against him : "We call you to the Book of Allah the Almighty and Glorious, and to the Sunnah of the Prophet (Sm.) and to the Administration of Abu Bakr and Umar—May God be well pleased with them—and to renounce Uthman and Ali because they corrupted the true religion and abandoned the authority of the Book."

Their Religious Beliefs: Their religious beliefs, which were really the reflection of their political attitudes, were as uncompromising as their political principles. They constantly discussed

among themselves and with other Muslims such questions as "Who is a free Arab, *i.e.* a good Muslim?" "What is a sin?" etc. And they constantly scrutinised each other's acts and conduct. The Quran ruled their lives and their imagination and the fear of hell inspired them to puritanic righteousness. In fact, they were the Puritans of early Islam. Once a Khariji picked up a date on the road and would not eat it till he had paid its owner for it.

The Khawarij were mercilessly severe in punishing any Muslim who did not accept any tenet of their creed, and declared him to be an infidel to be put to death as a "murtadd" or apostate. As a matter of fact, it was their cruel behaviour, and not their religious creed, that made them so bitterly hated by their fellow-Muslims.

Their Islam was indeed the Islam of action, of deeds and not of mere profession. One of the cardinal principles of the Kharijis was the absolute rejection of the ordinary belief of justification by faith, that is, by words and not by works. They pushed this moral strictness to the point of refusing the title of a believer to any one who had committed a great sin (the Kabira). He had, therefore, become a "murtadd", *i. e.*, an apostate to be damned to fires of hell. Their extreme sects, like the Azraqa, declared that he who had become an apostate in this manner could never re-enter the faith and should be killed for his apostasy along with his wives and children. From this arose their principle of 'istirad' or religious murder.

Khawarij's Fanatical Terrorism. The Kharijis resorted to this form of religious murder from the very beginning of their history. For instance, when large tracts of Iraq and South Persia came under their domination, they put to death a large multitudes of Muslims during the troubled days of the Second Civil War (683-97). They perpetrated many barbarous atrocities on the Muslims such as killing innocent men, women and children, travellers and town-dwellers, whom they constantly questioned about such matters as the rightfulness or otherwise of the caliphate of Uthman, Ali, Muawiyah, etc. In contrast to this, they treated the Christians and Jews with great tolerance, for the simple reason that they had never been Muslims. As is the case with all fanatics, the Kharijis would perpetrate barbarities and yet remain rigorously strict in moral conduct. For instance, a Khariji would search out and pay a Christian the price of his pig which he had killed on the roadside. But the next moment he would kill a Muslim without any qualm of conscience for he could not answer properly that Uthman was not unjustly killed for his nepotism. This was one of the reasons why Muslims in general regarded the Kharijis with utmost abhorrence and hostility. But this was also the

reason why they always attracted the most devout and fanatical among the Muslims to their ranks. They were inspired by the same reckless courage and unflinching zeal for martyrdom as were the heroes of early Islam. The only difference was that while the early Muslim heroes sought martyrdom and Paradise by a holy war on the infidels, the Kharijis sought the martyr's crown by a holy war against other Muslims. They might well be described as the theocratic terrorists of early Islam, bent upon destroying the society and state as built by other Muslims. "Religion brought them", as Wellhausen writes, "to an active, but an absolutely impolitic and desperate polity".

To conclude, Kharijism may be briefly described as "the natural insubordination of the Arabs, rationalised, systematised, exacerbated, and fanaticised by religious teaching."

Role and Influence of Kharijism on Islamic History. The Kharijis aimed at an impossible ideal in politics and religion, and endeavoured to realise it in practice regardless of its consequences. The force which impelled them was their Bedouin equalitarian nomadism, fortified by the principles of equality and fraternity of Islam and inspired by the feudal tribalism of Umar's administration. Though repeatedly suppressed by Ali and his Umayyad successors, they again and again rose into fierce revolts, recruited as they were from the normadic, and settled tribes of Iraq, Arabia and Persia and later of North Africa. Their second source of recruits were the Quran-readers and the pietist groups among the Muslims, who were of Bedouin origins and from the more aristocratic theologians and divines of Medina, Mecca, etc. They sought to establish the kingdom of God on earth, but on the impossible principle of "no government" of men, but of God. They were, indeed, the anarchists of early Islam. But on such principles no state could be built. Their only merit was their reckless courage and boundless devotion to the beliefs. But they caused endless anarchy and bloodshed. They even reduced the principle of election of a Caliph to an absurdity. They believed that their salvation lay in electing a caliph properly. But they ended in electing and deposing their own "caliphs." It split them in a short time into twenty different sects, which fought with each other as furiously as they fought against other Muslims. Thus, in the long run, they spread nothing but blood and terror, anarchy and confusion, discord and schism in the early Caliphate. They caused the death of Ali and the downfall of the Umayyads nearly a century after. However, the endless revolts of the Kharijis demonstrated the basic weakness of the early Caliphate, namely, its constitutional and political inability to establish a greater unity by overcoming the disruptive and disintegrating forces of nomadism and tribalism. The Desert remained unconquered by

the Sown. We have already seen how the Umayyad Caliphs met this challenge of the desert forces in the body politic of early Islam.

SHIAISM

Its History. The murder of Hazrat Uthman split Islam into two, at first, politically and then religiously. Shiaism was an outgrowth of this schism. Subsequently, several other events aided the further growth of Shiaism. They were *(i)* the events of the reign of Caliph Ali, *(ii)* Abdullah bin Saba's messianic preachings, *(iii)* the dynastic struggles between the Alides and the Sufyanids, culminating in the battle of Kerbala, which really ushered in Shiaism as we know it to-day, *(iv)* the disaffection of the Bedouin tribes, especially of Kufa, towards the Umayyad rule and aristocracy, *(v)* the discontent of the Persian Mawali, which manifested itself, first of all, under al-Mukhtar, *(vi)* Umayyad oppression of the Ahl-al-Bayt, resulting in Alide revolts as that of Zayd bin Ali and of Ibn Muawiya at the end of the Umayyad period, and *(vii)* the national resistance of the Persians against the Arab domination, which made them adopt the Shia cause as their national cause of liberation from Arab rule. As usual, these causes and factors, political, religious, personal, dynastic and economic, were confusedly intermingled and involuted. We have already dwelt upon these events in previous chapters. Here we shall trace their influence upon the rise of Shiaism.

Dispute over the Caliphate and the origin of the term "Shia". The murder of Uthman raised the question of the caliphate in a new form. Hitherto, the election of a caliph was disputed with words but not with swords. The election of Hazrat Ali was challenged by an appeal to arms by those who wanted to punish the murderers of Uthman for reasons of personal ambition or justice. So Ali spent his whole reign in fighting against his rivals in order to restore the unity of the Empire of Islam. This led to a long-drawn struggle with Muawiya who became the rival caliph at Damascus. This fact shattered the political unity of Islamic Empire. There were now two parties in it, *viz.*, the Party or "Shia" of Ali, and the Party or "Shia" of Muawiya. In Arabic, "Shia" means a party or a group of supporters. The Iraqis, especially the tribes of Kufa were the "Shia" of Ali, while the Syrian Arab tribes were the "Shia" of Muawiya —a rivalry which affected the whole subsequent history of Islam both as a polity and as a religion. Later, after Ali's death, when Muawiya became the first Umayyad Caliph of the re-united Islamic Empire, his "Shia" ceased to exist for there was now no rival and no need of a party of his supporters—his supporters had become his subjects and officials. But Hazrat Ali's "Shia" continued to exist as the supporters of his sons' claim to the caliphate. They became the Shia *par excellence*. Muawiya and his lieutenants in

Iraq, however, kept them under firm control. After his death, the dispute over the election of the caliph was renewed once again between Muawiya's son Yezid and Ali's son, Husayn, which ended in the battle of Kerbala. In the history of the rise of Shiaism, Kerbala became at once a great tragedy and a rallying-point. For centuries afterwards its memory collected an increasing number of Muslims under the green banner of the Ahl-al-Bayt or the Family of Ali. Moreover, what was a purely political issue now became a religious dispute, for it demned the Umayyads as an ungodly race in the eyes of all those Muslims who sympathised with the Ahl-al-Bayt or hated the secular rule of the House of Umayya or were oppressed by the tyranny of their officials or by their taxes or by the tribal nationalism of the Arabs on whose support the Umayyads relied so much. So, to be an anti-Umayyad meant to be either a Khariji or a Shia, the partisan of the Ahl-ul Bayt. Among those who became Shia were, at first, mostly Arabs, but in course of time, the non-Arab Mawali also joined them in increasing numbers.

Abdullah bin Saba's Messianic preachings. The political history of Shiaism was, from the very beginning, intermingled with the theological ideas and interpretations of a Jew of Yemen, named Abdullah bin Saba. He preached the Jewish-Christian doctrines of "*wasi*" or executor of a prophet's will, of a Messiah, and of the deification of Ali. He was a firebrand of sedition, which he spread from Basra and Kufa to Fustat in the days of Uthman. Although repudiated by Hazrat Ali himself, he continued to propagate his doctrines among the disaffected tribes and peoples, especially of Iraq and Egypt. Later, these doctrines appealed to the people for reasons of political tyranny or economic oppression and exploitation of the Umayyad rulers. They constituted the extremists, the "*Ghulat*", among the Shia supporters of the House of Ali.

Al-Mukhtar and the Mawali. The first of the Arab leaders who openly accepted Ibn Saba's Messianic doctrines and went to the extreme of deifying Ali was al-Mukhtar, a versatile genius, who possessed the qualities of a political adventurer, social reformer and charlatan. His main support came from the Persian Mawali of Kufa who had become strongly tinged with the Saba-ite Shia-ism For the first time in Islamic History, Shiaism appeared in the role of the Persian national revolt against the Arab domination. The Mawali revolt of al-Mukhtar was crushed, but the alliance between the Persian Mawali and Shiaism survived in many forms, till it reappeared in the form of Hashimite revolt of the Abbasides who overthrew the Umayyads under the leadership of Abu Muslim and his Khurasani Shias.

The Shia-ite Imams and sects. The question of Imamate

divided the Shia Muslims as much into several sects as the identical question of the caliphate divided other Muslims into various parties and sects. At first, Hazrat Ali and his two sons. Hasan and Husayn, were the Imams of the Ahl-ul-Bayt. But the death of Husayn at Kerbala created the first rift among the Shias. The more strict supporters of Ali accepted Husayn's little son, Ali Zayn-ul-Abideen, as the legitimate Imam of the Ahl-ul Bayt, though he was at that time a little child. But there was a grown-up son of Ali, named Muhammad ibn-al Hanafiya, born to another wife. Other Shias accepted him as the Imam, particularly those who followed the Sabaite Kaisan, a freedman of Hazrat Ali. This created two sects among them, the Imamiyya or the Legitimists who supported the claims of the children of Ali and Fatima, and the Kaisanis who supported Ibn-ul Hanafiya's claim to the caliphate. When he died in 700 A. D., the Kaisani sect proclaimed his son, Abu Hashim, as their Imam. Thus they came to be known as the Hashimiyya or Kaisaniyya sect.

The Legitimist Imams remained in retirement at Medina and did not play an active role against the Umayyads. The Kaisani or Hashimiyya sect, on the other hand, was more active in Shia opposition to the Umayyad Caliphs. Abu Hashim even joined hands with the Abbaside Imam, Muhammad bin Ali, in opposing the Umayyads. On his death in 717 A. D., almost all his Shia followers joined the Abbaside faction, now secretly working against the Umayyads in Kufa, Iraq, Persia and Khurasan.

In the last days of Hisham, Zayd bin Ali, revolted against Hisham. He was defeated and killed. But his supporters formed a new Shia sect, called Zaydiyya. It was a branch of the Imamiyya and stood in between the Imamiyya and Orthodox Muslims on the question of the caliphate. However, there was no strict alignment among the Shias, who often supported both the Legitimist and the Hashimite Imams. It was only in the Abbaside period that irreconcilable differences arose among the Shias, which finally split them into many sects. During Umayyad period, the Shia-ite opposition was more political than religious or theological, as it became during the Abbaside period.

Basic doctrines of Shiaism. The early Shias were as little clear in their basic doctrines as they were consistent in their allegiance to their Imams. It was mainly due to the reason that early Shiaism was under two powerful influences of Islamic teachings, on the one side, and of the Judaic-Christian influences, on the other. This created two trends among them. The Imamiyya sect, on the whole, represented Islamic influence, while the Kaisani or Hashimiyya sect was strongly imbued with the Jewish-Christian doctrines of Ibn Saba. But basically there was much in common between the two,

for the difference between the two trends was more of degree than of kind. The Saba-ite Shias went to the extreme of what the Imamite Shia also believed. We shall describe here their common doctrines, along with the extremist variations of the Saba-ites.

The Shia-ite conception of Imamate. Like all other early Muslims, the Shia accepted that Islam as a state and a religion should be headed by an Imam, or a Caliph. (Originally there was no distinction between these two terms, for the word 'khalifa' meant a successor to the Holy Prophet who naturally was also the Imam or spiritual leader of the Muslim community as a whole). But they differed with other Muslims regarding the law of succession to the caliphate. Unlike most other Muslims, the Shia believed that the Imamat or Khilafat in Islam should descend only within the Family of the Holy Prophet, the Ahl-al-Bayt, who alone had the legitimate claim to the Headship of Islam, As the Holy Prophet had no son, he was to be succeeded by Ali, his cousin and the husband of his daughter, Fatima, to the sovereignty of the Islamic State. But, according to them, Ali was deprived of this legitimate right by Abu Bakr and Umar, who usurped the caliphate to themselves, and later by Uthman. He was followed by Muawiya who continued the anti-Alide trend in the eyes of Ali's Shia, when he actively opposed him after his election as Caliph.

This was the politics of early Islam. But to this was soon added religious dogmas, as it must be, for in early Islam, politics could not long remain separate from religious beliefs and interpretations. Indeed, it got religious colouring from the very beginning of the controversy over the caliphate.

From the very beginning the supporters of Hazrat Ali claimed that he and his children had a divine right to the caliphate. According to them, Ali was not merely the leading and the most worthy of the Prophet's Companions, as other Muslims also believed, but was also the only one to succeed the Prophet as his Khalifa. They quoted several Ahadith of the Holy Prophet to this effect; for example, the Holy Prophet said "Those who regard me as their Maula, should regard Ali also as their Maula", or, "I am the citadel of Faith, and Ali is its gate." The partisans of Ali further averred that the Holy Prophet during his last illness intended to nominate Ali as his successor, but was prevented by Hazrat Umar (and according to others, by Ayesha) from doing so. Thus, according them, although Allah and His Prophet had clearly designated Ali as the only legitimate successor but the first three Caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman, prevented the legitimate title of Ali to succession, a right which they usurped to themselves. These early supporters of Ali styled themselves as "*Ahl an Nass w-al Tayeen*"— the people of divine ordinance and designation. We call them the

Legitimists. At first their number was small, but in the days of the Civil War between Ali and Muawiya, it swelled to thousands. Then they came to be known as the *Shiatul Ali*, the Party of Ali. However, all this was strictly within the simple theology of Islam.

Origin of Ghulat or Extremist Shiaism. The conquests of Abu Bakr and Umar spread Islam in Arabia and in lands beyond her borders and brought many Jews and Christians into the fold of Islam. They brought with them their earlier beliefs and interpreted Islam in the light of them. This was what Abdullah bin Saba, the Jewish convert, did. He interpreted the legitimist claims of Ali by his Judaic-Christian notions of "*wasi*" and "*messiah*" and even defied Hazrat Ali.

Ali as a 'wasi'. Abdullah bin Saba preached that every prophet had a 'wasi' or executor of his will, who carried on his mission after his demise; for instance, Moses had Aaron. According to him, therefore, Muhammad (Sm) had also Ali as his 'wasi' and "just as Muhammad is the last of the Prophet, Ali is the last of the wasis". This was, indeed, a Jewish idea. It gave a theological basis to the legitimist claims of Ali.

Deification of Ali. But Abdullah bin Saba did not rest there. He went a step further and proclaimed that a Divine Spirit inheres in a prophet which is transfused into the 'wasi' and, indeed, is further transfused into his children ever afterwards. Thus the Divine Spirit which dwelt in the Holy Prophet was transfused into Ali after his death and inherited by all his children who succeeded him in the Imamate. The doctrine of divine transfusion was later interpreted by him as the doctrine of divine incarnation. He once greeted Hazrat Ali as "*anta anta*", *i.e.* "You are God". Hazrat Ali, however, repudiated his doctrines and banished him for saying so. But many Sabaite followers later worshipped Ali and his descendants as gods. Many such scenes of worship were performed by Mawali Shias of al-Mukhtar during his brief rule of Kufa. It is said that Ali's granson, Abu Hashim, the son of Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiya was the first to be so worshipped.

Alide Imams as Mahdis or Messiahs. Ibn Saba and his followers introduced another alien doctrine into Islam. It was the Jewish-Christian doctrine of Messiah, who would return to the earth as a divine reformer and purify it of the evils and tyranny after a reign of darkness and oppression had afflicted it. It was easy to give it an Islamic colouring in two ways. Firstly, Muslims also believe in the return of Jesus before the Day of Judgment; and in the coming of the Mahdi, or "God-guided" reformer who would purge the world of injustice and darkness and fill it with justice and peace. From this followed, as a natural corollary, another Extremist

doctrine of "Imam Ghaib." However, the doctrines of Messiah and "Imam Ghaib" became prevalent among various sects of Shiaism during the days of the Abbaside Caliphate, due to the religio-political and social conditions which existed then.

THE PIETISTS

Their history. With the establishment of the Umayyad Caliphate at Damascus, the birth-place of Islam, Medina, lost its primacy in the politics of early Islam. This loss was particularly resented by the Companions and their children who had suffered so much in building Islam as a religion and a state, and had nurtured and nourished it into a vast empire. They were, therefore, hostile to the Umayyads from the very outset of their rule. To this class also belonged such other sections of the Muslim community as the Quran-readers, the learned divines and all those who looked back to the days of the Holy Prophet and the Orthodox Caliphs, whose rule and policy they accepted as a model for all the rulers of Islam. These people were called the "orthodox" or pietist sections of the Muslim community. They bitterly disliked the secular nature of the Umayyad rule. But they generally remained neutral in politics and devoted themselves mostly to religious duties and studies. They collected the Ahadith, interpreted and commented on Quran and evolved Islamic jurisprudence or Fiqh. There were, however, some among them who actively opposed Umayyad seizure of power. They constituted the Pietist Opposition to the Umayyads. It was with their support that Abdullah bin Zubayr established his ephemeral Caliphate of Mecca. After his defeat and death, the Pietists continued to oppose the Umayyads, but in a more silent manner. In course of time, they migrated to new centres of Muslim thought and influence, such as Basra, Kufa, Fustat, etc. They played a significant, though not a leading, role in the downful of the Umayyads But their influence continued to increase long after the fall of the Umayyads. In the Abbaside days, they came to constitute the Orthodox or Sunni community of the Muslims.

Their Principles. The Pietists regarded the Umayyads as tyrants, for they had captured the Islamic Caliphate by force and transformed it into an instrument of their dynastic power and aggrandisement. They charged the Umayyads with trampling under foot the Right Islam, that is, the Quran and Sunnah, and that they abused power, and spent moneys of the state on their private pleasures and luxuries. Above all, they blamed them for transforming the caliphate from elective into dynastic one. They held (*i*) that the caliph must be elected by the Muslim community; and (*ii*) that he must be a Qurayshite, that is, of the tribe of the Prophet. In the first point, they were one with the Kharajis, but in the second they differed from them. Unlike the Kharijis, they confined the right to cali-

phate to the Qurayshites alone, justified on the basis of Hadith of Prophet and the Sunnah of the Pious Caliphs.

THEOLOGICAL PARTIES

1. THE MURJITES : THE LIBERAL PARTY

In the fierce religious and political disputes of the rival parties, there arose one which assumed a more tolerant and liberal attitude. It was the party of the Murjites. It was more theological than political, both in questions of religion and of opposition to the ruling Umayyads. Only one of the Murjites, Harith bin Surayj in Khurasan, actively opposed the Umayyad rule. He strove to do justice to the Persian Mawali who were required to pay Jizya by the greedy Umayyad officials.

Their Principles. The doctrine of deferment or Arja'a. The basic tenet of the Murjite creed, from which their name was derived, was that no one who professed belief in One God, could be declared as an infidel for any kind of sin he committed, until God Himself should decree against him. Hence the judgment against a Muslim was to be "deferred" till the Day of Judgment. Hence the name "*murja*" *i.e.* he who defers, from *arja'a*, to defer. In the practical politics of the day, the application of this principle meant that the Murjites, as contrasted to the Kharajis, refused to condemn Uthman or Ali, for God alone whould judge whether or not they went off the right path during their reigns. But they also rejected Alide or Umayyad claims to caliphate. However, they adopted a neutral attitude towards the actual rule of the Umayyads, except the Khurasani Murjite, Harith bin Surayj, who was ready to revolt in order to do justice to the Mawali. Further, unlike the Kharijis, they upheld the principle of justification of faith by words rather than by works. Their moderate and liberal beliefs were best represented by Imam Abu Hanifa, the first jurist of Islamic jurisprudence, called *Fiqh*, He died in 767 A.D.

2. MUTAZILITES : A RATIONALIST PARTY

Their origin. In the later part of the Umayyam period, Basra had become a religious centre of Islam, where dwelt many divines and theologians of Islam, including the famous divine, Hasan al-Basri. One day he was asked to give his opinion on the question of whether or not a Muslim became an infidel if he committed a greater sin,—a question on which the Kharijis and the Murjites held very contrary opinions. Before he had answered it, one of his pupils, named Wasil bin Ata, replied that such a Muslim was neither a believer nor an unbeliever. He then turned away to

explain his reply. Upon this Hasan remarked that "*Wasil has separated himself from us.* (*i'tazala anna*). Thus Wasil and his followers came to be known as the party of the *Itazila* or the *Mutazila*, the Schismatics or the theological separatists. They flourished really in the Abbaside period.

Their Principles. The Mutazila called themselves as the "*Ahl-ul Tawhid wa'l Adl*", that is, the people of Unity and Justice. By 'unity' they meant the principle of Reason and by justice the principle of "free will". We shall explain their doctrines in detail in a later chapter.

CONCLUSION

A Review of the Opposition Parties and Sects. From the above survey, it is obvious that the House of Umayya was gradually undermined and its influence destroyed by the Opposition Parties, both political and religious. They ultimately brought about its fall. However, the influence of these parties did not end with the downfall of the Umayyads. On the contrary, they continued to work against or for the new dynasty of Banu Abbas, in one form or another. Thus they played a part in the evolution of Muslim thought in subsequent centuries and contributed to the renaissance of Arab culture, literature, science and learning and also of the Islamic theology and learning. For this reason, the Umayyad period might, well be regarded as a period of incubation or preparation. It was the seeding time of the great civilisation and culture of Medieval Islam.

Chapter 48

SOCIETY, CULTURE AND LITERATURE UNDER THE UMAYYADS

THE UMAYYAD SOCIETY

The Umayyad society was a composite one, divided and subdivided by various kinds of distinctions and differences of wealth, social status, religion, race, culture, etc. Religiously, it was divided into the Muslims and Non-Muslims, a distinction which was also political, for the Muslims were the ruling classes while the non-Muslims were subject peoples. Socially, both religious groupings, the Muslims and non-Muslims, could be divided into the following classes : feudal aristocracy, the Middle class, the Arab Muqatila or warrior-class, the Mawali, the Dhimmis, and the slaves. Economically, it was divided into the tribal and feudal society. This period in Islamic History also witnessed further evolution of the feudal society among the Arabs.

Social Structure under the Umayyads. The Umayyad society consisted of serveal strata or classes. They were the feudal aristocracy at the top, next the warrior class of the Arab tribes, the Maqatila, then the Mawali, who adopted Islam after the Conquest, the Dhimmis who remained non-Muslims, and lastly, the artisans and the slaves.

Feudal Aristocracy. It was the highest class, comprising the wealthiest families of the Arabs, who were the ruling section of the Empire and held the highest offices in civil and military hierarchy of the Empire. It included the caliphal family of the Umayyads, several leading families of the Muhajireen and Ansars of Medina and Mecca, who were the children of the Companions, and the leading families of all other Arab tribes. It is, however, difficult to ascertain their respective numbers. They held Qatia' lands, on which they paid a much lower tax, called the Ushr or tithe. Some of the best lands in the Empire were thus apportioned among the Feudal aristocracy, such as in the delta of Lower Iraq, called al-Sawad, which had become, as an Umayyad once boasted, the "garden of the Quraysh." The wealth and privileges of this class created resentment and opposition among all the other classes, the Muqatila, the Mawali and the Dhimmi serfs who bore the burdens of taxes, etc.

The Muqatila or the Arab warrior-class. Next in social-

hierarchy came the Arab tribes who had conquered and settled in the provinces of the Empire. They constituted the tribal feudalism of the Arab society. This class of warriors, received *atā* or pensions in lieu of which they were required to render milltary service on the frontiers and elesewhere as the State demanded. Their numbers increased rapidly after the Conquest. In Muawiya's days, 60,000 warriors dwelt in Kufa, 80,000 in Basra, and nearly 45,000 in the 'Jund' or military district of Damascus. As the Empire expanded, the warrior class also spread to new centres and frontiers of the Empire such as Khurasan, North Africa, Spain, where their colonies were set up. The social structure of the Warrior class was still based on tribal lines. They preserved their tribal formations of the pre-Islamic days. They formed tribal units in the army when on the march, commanded by their own tribal chiefs. These tribes were closely connected with the government of their provinces. It was the usual practice of the Umayyad caliphs to select their governors from among the most powerful tribes. The new governors always chose men of their tribes to hold all important posts in the civil and military departments of the province, At first, this method was a source of strength to the Umayyad Caliphate. But later it became the chief cause of their decline and downfall, for it engendered tribal jealousies and feuds, making the warrior class disaffected and disunited. Thus it weakened and destroyed the very foundation of the Umayyad Caliphate. The tribal Muqatila also resented the growth of the Qati'a-owning feudal aristocracy.

The Mawali. The rights and privileges in early Islam were only for the Muslims, that is, for the Arabs who alone were Muslims then. They enjoyed the rights of pension, governmental offices and other privileges. But during the Umayyad period, an ever-increasing number of non-Muslim subjects adopted Islam for one reason or another, such as persuasion, superior attraction of conversion, etc. These new converts were called the "Mawali" or clients (Sing Maula). They were the non-Arab Muslims. Theoretically, Islam granted equal rights and privileges to all Muslims. But the arrogant and greedy Umayyads, caliphs as well as their officials, continued to impose the taxes, Jizya and Kharaj, and other restriction upon them as before their conversion. Furthermore the proud racial nationalism of the Arab tribes, the Muqatila of the garrison towns, did not grant them equal social status on the battlefield and in ordinary life. Though the Mawali fought the battles of Islam, they had to march on foot, while the Arabs rode on horseback; the Mawali were often, denied their share in the booty, and they had also no share in the pensions of the Diwan. In social gatherings, the proud Arabs kept the Mawali at a distance, relegating them to an inferior position, no better than that of the slaves. These discriminations and disabilities engendered strong feelings of resentment among the

Mawali, many of whom were far more learned in the Quran and Islamic theology than the Arabs themselves. "Against Shiaites and Kharijites, the Umayyads might claim with some show of reason to represent the cause of law and order, if not Islam; against the bitter cry of oppressed Mawali they had no argument save the sword."[1] Their resentment expressed itself in revolts like that of al-Mukhtar, and of Abdullah bin Muawiya. Afterwards, the Mawalis, particularly of Kufa and Khurasan, joined the Opposition Parties of the Shia and the Abbasides and thus overthrew the pro-Arab rule of the Umayyads.

The Mawali were a mixed lot of people, including Persians, Armenians, Egyptians, Berbers and other non-Arab subject races of the Umayyad Empire. They were drawn from several sources. They were, firstly, the prisoners of war captured by the early Arab armies and brought to their military cities as slaves of the family or the tribe which captured them. After a generation or two, these slaves adopted Islam and became free, but continued to be attached to their master's family or tribe as its clients, or Mawali. Secondly, many Kharaj-paying Dhimmis adopted Islam. They deserted their villages and migrated to the garrison cities, where the Muqatila warrior-Arabs were stationed, and settled in the suburbs. There they became workmen, artisans, shopkeepers, merchants and domestic servants of aristocratic Arab families. Many of the Mawali devoted themselves to the study of Islamic scriptures and became learned divines and traditionalists.

The number of the Mawali increased rapidly at the end of the Umayyad rule, creating difficult problems for the Umayyads, both social and financial. Socially and politically, the Mawali were treated as inferior Muslims by the Umayyad administrators. They were not appointed to important civil or military positions. Marriages between the Mawali and the Arabs were socially prohibited; social contact with the Mawali was disapproved by the proud Arabs. Pensions were denied to them, and sometimes they were not even given their share in the spoils of war, although they participated in the wars of Islam. Financially, the Umayyad governors and tax-collectors, like Hajjaj, continued to collect Jizya and Kharaj from them, as if they were still non-Muslims. This became one of their main grievances against the Umayyad rule, which therefore appeared to them as un-Islamic. Moreover, as the number of the new Muslims exceeded that of the Arabs, the Mawali regarded it unjust that a minority of Arabs should rule a majority of the Muslims. Only Umar bin Abdul Aziz tried to do justice to them. But his reign was too short to effect any lasting change in Umayyad policy towards the new Muslims or Mawalis. Their discontent and resent-

1. R. A. Nicholson, *Literary History of the Arabs*, p. 248.

ment became one of the important reasons of the downfall of the Umayyads. It began with the revolt of the Khurasani Mawali under the Abbaside Abu Muslim, himself perhaps a Persian Maula of Kufa.

The Dhimmis (Zimmis). The non-Muslim non-Arab subject races and peoples of the Arab Empire were called Dhimmis (or Zimmis) or the Ahl al Dhimmah, the protected people. They were called so because they had accepted the protection of the Muslim State on the condition of remaining loyal and peaceful and paying the subject-tax, called Jizya. The non-Muslims had no duty to render military service to the Islamic State as the Muslims had. Those Dhimmis who possessed land also paid Kharaj or land-tax. They also presented gifts to their rulers. The Umayyad Caliphs treated the Dhimmis with great tolerance and justice. They employed many Christians and Magians in their service, both in the capital and in the provinces, especially as scribes or katibs, tax-collectors and record-keepers. Many Persian Dihqans or landlords, held important posts in their districts, and even enjoyed equality with the Arabs in the administration of the regions. In the beginning of the Umayyad rule, the Dhimmis predominated in all the provinces. But later, many of them adopted Islam and became Mawali, especially in Egypt, North Africa, and Khurasan. Even then, Syria remained a predominantly Christian country till the very end of the Umayyad rule. The Dhimmis belonged to various professions and classes. They were landlords, cultivators, artisans, workmen, merchants, medicine men, monks, clergy, etc. Indeed, the Umayyad Arabs lived on the industry and agriculture, science and learning, arts and labour of the Dhimmis, and later of the Mawali, as many Dhimmis adopted Islam but continued their ancestral professions and trades,

The Slaves. Although Islam did not approve slavery, yet it also did not prohibit it. With the increase in the wealth and luxuries of the Umayyad Arabs, among both the feudal aristocrats and the warrior class, the number of the slaves grew rapidly. As a matter of fact, even at the end of the Orthodox Caliphate, their number was very great. For instance, every Arab soldier in the Battle of Siffin had ten slaves, men and women, attending on him. During the Umayyad period, their numbers increased by leaps and bounds. The most important source of their supply was the wars of conquest on the borders of the Empire. The great victories of the Umayyads always brought a large supply of slaves to the capital and to the slave-market of the Empire. For instance, Qutayba bin Muslim captured 100,000 slaves during his campaigns in Central Asia; Musa bin Nusayr took 300,000 captives in North Africa and Spain, of whom 30,000 were the daughters of the Spanish nobles, many of whom were presented as gifts to the Caliph and his

grandees in Damascus. It is said that an Umayyad prince possessed no less than a thousand slaves, while the lyrical poet of Mecca, Umar bin abi Rabia, had seventy slaves. The slaves were usually of three kinds. Firstly, there were slaves who earned income for their masters by the skill of their hands or labour. The second catagory of slaves, both males and females, were the domestic servants, who worked at the menial jobs in the houses of their masters. Lastly, there were the slave-girls who were the concubines of their masters. If a son was born to a slave-girl, she became Umm-al Walad, but not the wife of her master. Her son was free but she remained a slave, though not to be sold by her master. The institution of slavery was indeed, the melting-pot of the Umayyad Caliphate, in which the proud Arab race lost its racial purity, as its blood mixed with all the races whose women were brought or bought as concubines. This process of de-Arabization was particularly great in the frontier regions, like Khurasan and Spain, where the Arab settlers took to native wives and concubines.

Social position of the women. As regards the social position of the Muslim women, the Umayyad period was an age old decline and degradation. Their position declined from conditions of equality, dignity, freedom and liberty to those of inferiority, subjection and luxurious captivity. These changes were brought about by the introduction or adoption of such social institutions as concubinage, the veil, the Harim and the employment of the eunuchs. Just as the Umayyads had adopted several political and military institutions and practices of the Byzantines and the Persians, so they borrowed the Purdah system from the Persians and the custom of guarding their harims by the eunuchs, from the Byzantines. These institutions rapidly lowered the social status of the Muslim women, especially of the Arabs who dwelt in the cities and towns, like Damascus, Kufa, Basra, etc. The nomadic tribes of the provinces still preserved the old conditions of freedom and liberty for their womenfolk. There were, however, some women of great charms, dignity and learning. They were, to mention a few, the daughter of Husayn, named Sukaina, who was renowned for her learning, charms, beauty and her fondness of song and poetry, Ayesha bint Talha, Umm-ul-Banin, the sister of Umar II and the wife of Walid I, the royal lady, who often took Hajjaj bin Yusuf to task for his harsh rule, lastly, the saintly Rabia al-Basri, one of the earliest Sufis in Islam.

Transformation of the Arab Society From Tribalism to Feudalism: The rise and spread of Islam and the conquests of early Muslims brought about a great change in the Arab society during the Umayyad period. It was the growth of a feudal society among the Arabs, who had hitherto known only a tribal society. No doubt, this transition was neither universal throughout the length and

breadth of the Umayyad Caliphate, nor complete in the socio-economic sense. On the contrary, it was effected in a few restricted territories of the caliphate and remained mainly rudimentary in form. At the same time, it must be remarked that the Arab feudalism really took the place of the earlier Byzantine or Sassanid feudal classes and systems. Nevertheless, the fact remains that for the first time the Arabs evolved a social order with which they were not acquainted in their desert homeland. This was the reason why this evolution was viewed with so much opposition and abhorrence by many sections and parties of the Arab people, who, as usual, blamed the Umayyad rulers for bringing about this chonge.

The establishment of Tribal Feudalism. The great conquests and expansion of the Arabs in the reigns of Hazrat Abu Bakr and Umar raised a difficult problem for them, that is, what to do with the conquered lands? Hazrat Umar was steeped in the traditions of the collective communal life of Arab tribalism. Neither he nor most of his advisers could accept the solution of this problem by distributing the conquered lands among the soldiers and commanders of the victorious armies as their private ownership. He therefore established a collective ownership of the Arab tribes in these conquered lands by his Diwan System. Under it, the lands conquered by the Arab tribes were regarded as their property, held in trust by the Caliphal State in such a way that each member of these tribes got an allotted share or *atā* from the Bayt al-Mal on the basis of the Diwan of Pensions. Thus the Arab tribes became feudal owners in respect of these lands. This was the feudal tribalism of Hazrat Umar. It was a compromise solution of an otherwise difficult problem, for (*i*) it did not disturb the tribal society with which the Arabs were accustomed and (*ii*) it also did not dispossess the former owners and cultivators of the conquered lands, but simply transformed them into the tenants and serfs of their new masters. They not only retained their religion but also their lands, paying to their Arab masters a poll-tax or Jizya for their religion and a land-tax or Kharaj for their lands.

Beginnings of Qati'ā Feudalism under the Umayyads. The tribal feudalism of Hazrat Umar could not last long. Firstly, some of the non-Muslims were inclined to change their faith for Islam, or fled away from the Arab Empire for its sake, and secondly, some of the Arabs were eager to acquire lands as their personal property. These changes created several difficult problems for the Umayyads. In fact the rise and fall of the Umayyad Caliphate was due to the gradual but inevitable breakdown of the tribal feudalism of Hazrat Umar The Umayyad rulers endeavoured to substitute a new type of feudalism, the Qati'ā feudalism, for it. But they never achieved a complete and permanent transformation. It was due to the absence of resolute feudal leadership among them.

What was Qati'a feudalism ? Lands began to pass into Muslim hands for three reasons: (*i*) either they were deserted by their former owners for political reasons, such as by the former rulers and nobles who fought against the Arab invaders. Such deserted lands became the Crownlands or al-Fay ; (*ii*) or they were sold by the Dhimmis to the Muslims when Hazrat Uthman lifted the ban on such a sale imposed by Hazrat Umar, (*iii*) or the former Dhimmi-owners adopted Islam and thus became Muslim land-owners. Many Persian nobles thus became Muslim landlords. Thus all those lands which were deserted by their former Persian or Byzantine owners, or were waste and uncultivated lands called "*mawat*", became the property of the Muslim State. Hazrat Uthman was the first Muslim ruler who granted these Mawat lands as leases among the Muslim landowners, mostly his relatives, the Quraysh nobles and other wealthy Arabs. They were called the Qati'a or fiefs. The Muslim landlords were to cultivate them and pay a tithe called Ushr on them. They did not reside on their estates, but cultivated them with the labour of the native tenants or serfs. Later Muawiya and other Umayyad Caliphate increased the Qati'a lands to a great extent. Large tracts of Iraq, Syria, Egypt and other provinces were distributed among the Umayyad Caliphs, their nobles and supporters.

Historical Impasse of Arabian Feudalism: The development of the big or Qati'a feudalism under the Umayyads, as under the Abbasides after them, remained incipient and rudimentary. It was really like an island amid the vast ocean of Arabian tribalism. In fact, the vast territories of the Umayyad Empire, such as in the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Persia, Syria, Egypt and North Africa, were still predominantly lands of primitive tribal society. Only in some fertile regions of the Empire, some feudalisation of the Muslim society had taken place. Even in these regions, the Qati'a estates were much fewer than the vast kharaj-paying lands of the tribal feudalim.

Why could full-fledged feudalism not develop in the Umayyad Caliphate ? No historian of Islam, Muslim or non-Muslim, medieval or modern, eastern or western, has ever attempted an explanation of this problem. In order to explain it, we shall have, first, to make a detour into the social psychology and anthropology of the medieval Islamic society.

Achievement Gap in the Generation Cycle : All civilisations and cultures in human history depend for their continuity and development on the transmission of the achievement qualities and capabilities of head and heart, character and personality of their people from the earlier generations to the succeeding ones. This transmission of capabilities and skills takes place, primarily and basically, in the family life, that is, in the bio-social group of

parents and their children. The nature and quality of this transmission depends on the nature and quality of the family relations, the relations between husband and wife or concubine, between father and mother and between them and their children and between other members and dependents of the family group. But these relations, in their turn, depend upon the kind of civilisation and culture, in which they are socially recognised and sanctioned.

Now, every civilisation and culture are subject to two fundamental changes, firstly, due to sexual reproduction which gives rise to new generations and, secondly, due to socio-historical factors, such as religion, war and conquest, political changes and crises, needs for economic production and development, increase in population, spread of new ideas, education and knowledge, new inventions and discoveries or innovations, customs and fashions. All of these factors are man-made changes, but they change social atmosphere and environment from year to year, decade to decade and from generation to generation, sometimes very rapidly and briskly and sometimes slowly and gradually. Fast or slow, great or small, these changes confront the succeeding generations with the need to achieve them again by means of the original qualities and capabilities of head and heart, which had enabled their forerunners, the earlier generations, to build and develop their civilisation and culture in their days. This can be done only by changing the family life and structure. This is all the more necessary if a civilisation and culture is greatly or radically changed by the rise and spread of new religion, by military conquest, migration to new habitat, and or to new geo-cultural environment, which give rise to new social, economic, political, cultural and other conditions, needs and problems, which the earlier forms of their social and family life and structure are unable to maintain and develop. When a new generation is unable to maintain and develop their society, state, culture and civilisation due to lack of necessary achievement qualities, capabilities, and skills of their hands, hearts and heads, we call this deficiency or deterioration as the achievement gap in the generation cycle. This gap is a spiritual and moral deficiency, which silently but inevitably corrodes and undermines the whole structure of their social life, culture and civilisation. This was what happened to the Arab Muslims under the Umayyad Caliphate.

Basic Achievement Structure of Human Society : All civilisation and culture are achievements. But the basic achievements, the basic structure of all civilisation and culture, and of a social system, are its economic system of production, *i. e.*, the means and methods, tools and techniques of its production system and the social relations necessarily based on it. It is here that the rot of the achievement gap in the generation cycle first appears.

Feudal Achievements of the Umayyads : There was, indeed, some development of feudalism under the Umayyads, particularly of what we may call its *infra-structure.* Umayyad caliphs, like Abdul Malik and Hisham, and administrators like Hajjaj bin Yusuf and Khalid al-Qasri, built dams and dykes, drained marshes, dug canals and water-channels, and constructed roads, bridges, etc. They also undertook some agricultural improvements such as the introduction of new plans and animals, like buffalo They also endevoured to confine cultivators to their villages, especially after their adoption of Islam and thus to check their flight to towns. The Umayyad rulers even imposed kharaj or land tax on those cultivators and landlords who became Muslims.

But after these rudimentary beginnings, Umayyad feudalism made no further development : it made no more progress beyond this direct exploitation of cultivators and serfs. They contributed nothing by way of improving the means and methods of production or improving old or inventing new tools and techniques of production. In fact, what little progress they did make was nothing new. It was really a repetition of what the ancient peoples of Iraq, Persia, and Egypt had achieved many a time hundreds, even thousands, of years before the rise of Islam.

Feudalism is such a social order in which land ownership is in the hands of the exlpoitative politico-military classes. It is always established by conquest and domination of invading tribes. It passes through two broad stages of development ; firstly, of direct exploitation of the subjugated peoples or peasantry by means of tribute and impost in cash or kind on them on the basis of military and political domination and superiority. At this stage, the exploiting classes directly contribute nothing to economic production except defending their landed estates and serfs from internal and external enemies and rivals and thus keeping peace and order in the kingdom or empire. At the second stage, the feudel classes begin to contribute some share in agricultural production by inventing and discovering new tools and techniques, new means and methods of production or borrowing them from others and introducing them on their estates and thus exploiting the labour power of the peasantry rather than directly taking away their produce. Naturally, when this stage is further developed, it passes into agricultural capitalism and ceases to be feudal, because politico-military domination is replaced by politico-economic domination of the land-owning classes, by their politico-legal control over land and its production processes. At this stage, communal ownership, which is found to some extent at the first stage, is completely replaced by private ownership of land of exclusively personal type. Thus the stage is set for the capitalistic transformation of the feudal society. The medieval Islamic society never

reached this stage, for it did not develop further due to reasons which we shall analyse now.

Development of feudalism in ancient Asia and Africa was really the old, old struggle of the peoples against their desert and semi-desert conditions,—the ancient struggle between the Desert and the Sown : the more the feudal economy developed, the more the Sown pushed the Desert back and extended the cultivated areas into the arid and semi-arid regions. But this achievement required the ceaseless effort and labour of generations after generations of the people. When it failed due to organisational weakness and incapacity of the politico-military ruling classes, the whole feudal social structure collapsed and brought the society and state-structure crumbling down to pieces.

The Umayyads did achieve much in the beginning. By laying down the *infra-structure* of their feudal economy, they extended the cultivated areas into the desert and marshy regions and founded and developed dozens of new towns and cities in these reclaimed regions, such as Kufa, Basra, Fustat, Wasit, Qayrowan, al-Jabiya, and others. Thus they rolled back the deserts, a historic achievement by any standard. But then their effort and energy slackened and fizzled out. The reason was the degeneracy of their feudal classes which had set in at the very core of their social life, their family system, where the gap in achievement capabilities first began.

The Roots of Achievement Gap in Umayyad Society : The Umayyad society, from that of the Caliph down to the poorest villager, townsman or nomad, was a kinship society of tribes, clans and castes. So far as the Muslims, whether Arabs or non-Arabs, were concerned, their kinship society was patriarchal in structure, with polygamous family system, along with slavery and servile concubinage, harim and increasing Purdah restrictions on free Muslim women. In short, their family life was based on the polygamous, concubinal structure with increasing harim and Purdah restrictions.

This form of family life was natural and necessary for the tribal mode of life and production, in which the Arabs lived before and after the rise of Islam. During the great period of military conquest and migration, this family system became more and more polygamous and concubinal. In fact, under the Umayyads, it became more concubinal than polygamous, as hundreds of thousands of war-captive women were brought into their homes and harims.

These changes, however, had disastrous effects on their family life and social evolution. They became more and more out of tune with the needs for the development of their feudal economy, which

required more regularised and responsible forms of family relations and more systemised and restricted forms of inheritance, so as to condition and attune the coming generations to the needs for developing their lands and property relations and consciousness, on the basis of which alone a more productive feudal society could be evolved.

These changes could be achieved by (*i*) instituting monogamy as the necessary and binding form of marriage for all, (*ii*) abolishing slavery, (*iii*) banning servile concubinage of both war-captive women and the slave-girls purchased in the slave-markets, (*iv*) freeing Muslim women from all harim and Purdah restrictions and injunctions, and (*v*) to restrict inheritance of landed property to sons exclusively, and in their absence, to daughters only, going to the collaterals only when a person died issueless.

These changes could not be brought about by the ruling classes due to their political position and expediency. They were to be, firstly and primarily, thought upon and taught by the religious writers, thinkers, and teachers, who were concerned with the laws and teachings of Islam. They were, then, increasing in importance and numbers under the Umayyads, known as the Ulema, especially in such centres of Islamic thought, as Medina, Kufa, Basra, and after the fall of Umayyads, in Baghdad and in Egypt, etc. Religion was the most powerful force in the life and society of the Umayyads, and the Ulema were becoming the most powerful and influential sections of the Umayyad society. But the inability of the Ulema and of the ruling classes of the Umayyads to adopt themselves to the changing needs and challenges of their social, political, economic and cultural life, due to the festering sore of their polygamous and concubinal family system, which produced generation gap in their character and mental capacities and qualities, was the real cause of the fall of the Umayyads and a vital lacuna in the life and society of the nascent Medieval Islam. But of this more later on.

Kinship Society of the Umayyads : The social malady of the Umayyads was, however, deeper still. Their polygamous and concubinal family system was at once the cause and result of their kinship society, which re-emerged among them with redoubled rigour as the teachings and tenets of early Islam were neglected by the ruling classes or misinterpreted by the Ulema. A kinship society is a society of tribes, castes and such other groups which are at once the outgrowth and outcome of the socio-sexual processes. It is a society of sex-groups organised on the basis of the natural economy and its myths of food-production. If the sex-groups are male-dominated, as they were under early Islam, they necessarily become polygamous, and if they are also war-like, they

become concubinal as well, as the Arabian tribes were, both before and after the rise of Islam.

Now kinship groups are essentially classless, communal groups. The differences of riches and social distinctions are minimal and are suppressed by the social disapproval. There exists a simple equality among the members of a kinship group, with the important means of production, such as lands, pastures, animals and the like, held as common property of the whole group, rather than the private property of any of its individual members or families. Any tendency towards personal or familial ownership of the communal means of livelihood is strongly resented by the whole group and forcibly suppressed by it.

The rise of Islam, which favoured private property and personal ownership, and the great conquests and migrations of early Islam brought about many changes in the Arabian Muslim society. But they did not abolish kinship relations. Instead, as we have said above, the tribal feudalism of Hazrat Umar's Diwan of Pensions preserved the tribal structure of the Arabs and gave it a military force of the Muqatila, the fighting force of the Arabian "super-tribe", socially and politically far more powerful and effective force than the puny force of any pre-Islamic Arabian tribe, howsoever big or small. Later events, which we have traced in details in previous chapters, led to the growth of big feudalism of the Qati'a estate-holders on the basis of private ownership of the lands. This development conflicted with the interests of the tribal feudalism of the Muqatila as well as with the rival interests and kinship relations of the other Arabian and non-Arabian Muslim classes and peoples, such as the Mawali. So, due to its increasing contradictions, the big feudalism of the Umayyad society failed to develop further. Instead, as time passed, it retrogressed more and more into kinship relations of the Arabian and non-Arabian Muslims. The whole history of the Umayyads was the history of these contradictions and retrogression into pre-Islamic kinship relations. Original Islam sought to de-tribalise Muslim society ; but the Umayyad social contradictions re-tribalised it. Islamic Umma became an empty slogan of the theologico-political parties, and divines all of whom came to be steeped in kinship tribal relations and notions.

Now a feudal society is essentially a class society, though at first, an incipient one. All feudal development, *i.e.*, all development of the feudal system of production, depends on the development of the feudal class relations. If anything hinders the growth and development of these relations or notions, it hinders the growth and development of feudal means and methods, tools and techniques of production and of the society that is organised on and for it.

In other words, it hinders the feudal transformation of the kinship society.

This was what happened in the Umayyad society. The class relations did grow to some extent under the tribal feudalism of the Muqatila and still more so under the big feudalim of the Qati'a estate-holders. But these class relations were hindered and stunted by the increasing degeneracy of their family life, which was increasingly disrupted and disorganised by the growth and spread of polygamy, servile concubinage, slavery, and the harim and Purdah restritcions among the nascent feudal classes, who retrogressed into kinship society, as one generation succeeded another. So the Umayyad feudalism failed to cut the umbilical cord of the kinship relations and ideas. Thus the achievement gap in the generation cycle among the feudal elite classes not only weakened and disrupted their social and political position and leadership in the Umayyad society and polity, but also encouraged and intensified the feuds, struggles and wars for political power and sovereignty between them and their mortal enemies, the theologico-political parties, such as the Kharijis, the Shia, the Mawali and the Abbaside pretenders. In these struggles and revolts and wars, they relied more and more on their kinship relations and ideas and regressed into the tribal forms of social life and relations. This was the social retrogression or immobilism of the medieval Islamic society, which we first witnessed under the Umayyads. Thus was the growth and further development of the big Qati'a feudalism arrested and stopped at the initial stages of its development.

CULTURAL LIFE

Town Life: Town-life under the Umayyads was becoming increasingly one of ease and luxury. The simplicity of the earlier times was discarded. Many luxuries and pleasures of the Byzantine and Persian cultures were adopted by the Arabs. Damascus was the centre of such luxuries and pastimes. But even Mecca and Medina became cities filled with the song and music, dance and festivities found in the less religious cities of the Empire. Singers and songstresses, dancers and slave-girls flocked to the saloons and fashion-resorts of Mecca.

Damascus: The ancient city of Damascus was the capital of the Umayyad caliphate, and lost this position with the fall of this dynasty. It became the most beautiful city of its age, adorned with palaces, magnificent buildings, mosques and fountains, and pleasure-houses. Among them Caliph Muawiya's Green Palace was built first. Damascus was supplied with abundant water, thanks to Yezid I, who constructed a canal, dug from a nearby river. Hundreds of the citizens of Mecca and Medina and thousands

of Arabs from other places flocked into it and made it their abode. In spite of the influx of the Muslims, Damascus retained its Christian complexion throughout the Umayyad period. Consequently the cultural, social, and administrative traditions and customs of the Byzantine days continued to exist and influence the Umayyad Caliphs. Muawiya and his successors and officials and feudal grandees adopted the luxurious ways of their Byzantine predecessors. The Umayyads even adopted the Byzantine custom of employing eunuchs to guard their harims of many wives and numerous concubines and captive women. To this extent, Damascus became a melting-pot of the Byzantine culture and the luxury-loving Quraysh aristocracy of Mecca. However, contrasted with Kufa and Basra, where tribal disloyalty and feuds were rampant, Damascus under the Umayyads was a haven of peace and order and good government. It was partly due to the Byzantine past, but mainly due to the administrative tact and skill of Muawiya and his successors.

Kufa and Basra: They were the problem cities of the Umayyad caliphate. Unlike Damascus, they were always full of discontent, disloyalty and sedition and revolt. This state of affairs was due to several reasons. Under the Umayyads, while Mecca become the city of poets, singers and songstresses and the idle rich. Medina the centre of theologians and commentators of Quran, the hadith-collectors, jurists and such other scholarly-minded people, Kufa and Basra became the storm centres of all the political, social, economic religious disputes and controversies which agitated the Umayyad caliphate from one end to the other. For instance, the politico-religious parties the Khawarij and Shia originated at Kufa a little before or at the very outset of the Umayyad caliphate, the philosophico-theological schismatics, the Mutazilites, originated from Basra at the close of this Caliphate.

Two factors were mainly responsible for these controversies and feuds in these cities; firstly, the growth of big feudalism and the transformation from a predominantly tribal to a feudal society, which process, however, was never fully effected. Coupled with it was the demographical transmutation of their citizenry from predominantly Arabian stock to predominantly Persian. However, the disputes and controversies which originated from these socio-economic and demographical changes were always expressed in the language of Islamic religious texts and terminology *i.e.* of the Quran and Sunna of the Prophet and to a lesser extent, Sunna of Abu Bakr and Umar.

As we have said above, the two cities of Kufa and Basra were founded by Hazrat Umar as garrison towns to station Arab armies operating in Iraq and Persia. Soon afterwards, they were settled by waves after waves of the northern and southern tribes of Arabia.

Early in Muawiya's reign, Basra was divided into five big tribal divisions, each called *khums* (fifth) and comprised several clans. These akhmas (fifths) belonged to the tribes of Tamim, Bakr, Azd, Adbulqays and Ahl al-Aliya, while Kufa was divided into four *arbas* or quarters. Each of these divisions had a chief. appointed by the governor, chosen from among the leading men of the tribes, for the purpose of distribution of the pension or *ata*. Each clan formed an independent unit. Moreover, at this time, the records of the Diwan or Register of Pensions were revised, omitting the names of the dead and adding, instead, some of the names of the newcomers. This was one of the examples how the Umayyad rulers tempered with the Diwan system.

In early Islam, every Arab was a soldier and devoted himself to military service all his life. At first the Arab settlers were all occupied with the military services. But the establishment of the Diwan of Pensions provided them with increasing luxuries and leisure. Partly because of the increase in numbers, and partly because of the decrease in military duties, they had not much of soldiering to do under the Umayyad rule. Their leisure enabled them to devote themselves to poetry, past history of Arabia, religious discussions and collection of the traditions of the Prophet (sm) and stories of their early conquests. These pursuits not only fostered the growth of Islamic studies and learning, but also led to religious discussions and party quarrels, mostly on the tribal basis of pre-Islamic Jahiliya days. In the beginning, in Kufa these quarrels had a religious tinge, while in Basra, they had tribalistic colour. So the citizens of Kufa and Basra fought with words or swords the past battles of the Jahiliya or of early Islamic period over and over again but more and more in religio-political terms. Thus arose Shia-ism, Kharijism, Mutazilism, Orthodox pietism and other religious sects of medieval Islam, or got their inspiration from the advocates, champions and even fighters of the two cities of Iraq.

Another social element was the Persian *Mawali*. They were the descendants of the Persians captured by the Arabs during their conquest of Iraq and Persia. They brought them to Kufa and Basra as their war-booty. After a generation or two, the Persian prisoners of war were set free. They adopted Islam and became the dependents or clients of their former Arab tribes, hence called the Mawali. The Persian Mawali of Basra and Kufa were a proud race, but fallen into evil days. However, they became devout Muslims, even more than their Arab masters and rulers. They took to trade and commerce, Arabic language and grammar or Islamic studies and learning. Many of them were skilled in the work of governmental departments, especially of finance and tax-collection. As Muslims, they were also recruited in the Muslim armies. But for all their skill, learning and services to Islam, they were looked

down upon with contempt by their former Arab masters, who kept them at a distance in social intercourse and gatherings. In fact, the Persian Mawali were the lower classes of tne Umayyad society, while the Arabs constituted its upstart aristocracy. This state of affairs engendered much social unrest and antagonism between the Persian Mawali and the Arabs of Kufa and Basra. But Islam which taught equality and brotherhood of all its believers inspired these Mawali with the hope of social justice and equality with their Arab masters. On the other hand, the Arabs were filled with the feelings of dominant Arabism or naltionalism. They were not inclined to grant the Mawali the equaiity in rights and privileges of Islam. The Umayyad Caliphate, its governors, officials and administrators were resolved to uphold Arabian socio-economic privileges and political dominance against all non-Arab peoples, Mawali or not. Naturally, the Mawali of Kufa and Basra turned towards the opposition parties, especially the Shia and to a lesser extent the Kharijis and others, in order to overthrow the hated Arabist rule of the Umayyads. These opposition parties painted their Umayyad rivals as a godless race who were against Islam and its teachings. The Kharijis talked of Islamic equality, simplicity and justice of the days of the first two Caliphs, Abu Bakr and Umar, and Shia promised justice and full membership of Islamic State to the Mawali under the Caliphate or Mesiahism of the Ahl ul-Bayt, and, later, the Abbasides talked of establishing the "law of the Prophet and Quran." Thus the Mawali were drawn more and more into the vortex of religio-political differences and disputes which first began in the days of Uthman in Kufa and Basra and assumed ever sharper forms under the Umayyads.

The two cities also epitomised another characteristic of the medieval Islamic Society and State, *viz*, lack of socio-political centralism and leadership. In spite of their great energy and dynamism, they were given to factionalism in politics and sectarian fanaticism in religion. There was no social and political unity and homogenity or uniformity in them. Only a few of their rulers, like Ziyad or Hajjaj, were able to maintain peace and order in them, but that even at a tremendous cost in life and blood of their citizens.

In view of the fact that Kufa aud Basra became the religious and intellectual centres of the Umayyad Empire, from where new religio-political and religio-social dogmas and sects spread to other cities and lands of the Empire, especially towards Persia and Khurasan, and from there to Central Asia and the South Asian subcontinent in subsequent ages, we can well realise what a tremendous influence these two cities had on the destinies of Medieval Islam and its empires and kingdoms for several centuries after the fall of the Umayyads. In fact, Medieval Islam was really born in Kufa and Basra, though it matured and fructified in the Baghdad

of the Abbasides. It would be no exaggeration to say that the decline of the caliphate of the Abbasides began when the social life and dynamism of these two cities began to stagnate and decline after the 10th century A. D.

Games and Pastimes. Almost all the Umayyad Caliphs retained the love of the desert and open air life. They built palaces and pleasure-houses in remote desert retreats, some of which have been recently excavated. Hunting and hounds were their usual pastimes. But they also took keen interest in horses and horse-racing. Some Caliphs, like Sulaiman and Hisham, kept as many as four thousand horses in royal stables. Even princesses trained and ran horses. Next to horse-racing, other popular pastimes were cock-fighting, dice, and card-playing. Among the drinks, wine, rose-sherbet and non-intoxicant drinks were common.

Poetry and Literature. Umayyad period was not favourable for literature, except poetry. It was an age of expansion and consolidation, when Arab energy was concentrated on these tasks. The Arabs had a national instinct for poetry, which alone flourished under the Umayyads. However, it was not Islamic poetry, but was the re-birth of the pre-Islamic Jahiliyah poetry. with little or no influence of Islam upon it. Instead of singing the songs of the splendid victories and herioc deeds of the early Muslim warriors and heroes, the Umayyad poets still composed and sang the *Qasidahs* of the desert-life, like the pre-Islamic Arab poets. Besides this form of poetry, the Umayyad poets also greatly developed the lyrical poetry, the *Ghazal*. The Umayyad court was flocked with poets, among whom the most famous were Jarir, an Arab Muslim and al-Akhtal, a Christian Arab. In the provinces flourished such famous poets as Farazdaq, in Kufa, Umar bin abi-Rabia in Mecca, and the eternally famous Qays bin al-Mulawwah of Layla-Majnun fame in the desert of Hijaz. The Umayyad period also witnessed a third kind of poetry, political poetry. Many poets sang praises of their tribes or the reigning caliph or hurled anathemas against their rival tribes, caliphs and parties. Moreover, along with the traditionalists, flourished the first historians of Islam, who collected the first-hand information about the early heroes of Islam and their victories and deeds. From their records, the Abbaside historians compiled their histories of Islam in subsequent ages.

Science and Philosophy. As compared to the Abbasides, the Umayyads were mere novices in science and philosophy. They made only one significant contribution, viz., by Khalid bin Yezid I, who was reputed to be the founder of Arabian alchemy or medieval chemistry, He was known as the "philosopher of

the Umayyads". A few of the Christian, Jewish and Magian physicians and doctors flourished in the court of the Caliphs and governors. In philosophy, the Mutazila, the Qadariya and other schools were still in their initial stages. Arabs to the core of their hearts, the Umayyads were more interested in oratory and odes, in genealogical tables and Jahiliyah stories rather than in scientific and philosophical discussions and debates.

Education. Warriors and conquerors as the Umayyad Arabs were, they had little time and still lesser inclination for education and learning. They regarded a man as educated if he had acquired a bare knowledge of his mother tongue and knew how to swim and use bow and arrows; and if he knew more than this, he indeed became a "Kamil" or perfect man. Nevertheless, some rudimentary start was made in education, especially because there was the ever-felt need for proper pronunciation and recitation of the Quran. Moreover, the Arabs loved their mother-tongue so much that they hated to mis-pronounce its words whether in polite conversation or in oratory. Hence mosques and palaces become schools for coaching children and the young folk in this religious and secular learning.

Origins of Muslim Theology. Early Islam had no systematic theology. As in secular learning, so in religious, the Umayyad period was only a period of incubation and preparation. It was a period during which the Muslim peoples,—the non-Arabs more than the Arabs, began to discuss and dispute over many a religious issue. These discussions and disputes were provoked all the more as such generations were born who had not seen and talked with the Holy Prophet and his Companions Hence a question arose as how to interpret the Quran and the Sunna. There were, broadly speaking, two kinds of religious movements: *viz.*, a particular and a general religious movement.

Particular Religious Movement. It was the movement among those Muslims who, at first, supported the claim of Hazrat Ali, and after his death, of his descendants, the *Ahl al-Bayt*, to the caliphate or succession to the Headship of Islam after the death of the Holy Prophet. This group came to be called the "party" or "Shia" of Ali and his descendants, regarded as the rightful *Imams* or religious and secular leaders of the Muslim community. In course of time, as we have described above, the Shia came to be divided into various sects, such as the Kaysaniyya or the *ghaliya* or extremist followers of al-Mukhtar, the Hashimiyya or the followers of Abu Hashim bin Mohammad bin al-Hanafiyya, a son of Hazrat Ali born to a woman of the Hanafia tribe, and the Zaidiyya. According to these Shia sects, only a member of the *Ahl al-Bayt* or an Alide Imam

could be a caliph or Amir al-Momineen, for he alone had the religious knowledge (*Ilm*) by inheritance, intuition or divine guidance, for the interpretation of the Quran. And it was by means of this knowledge that the many problems of the Muslim community could be solved. So the Imam-*cum*-Caliph was both the prayer-leader, the ruler and the law-giver of the Muslim community. The extremist Shia, like the Kaysaniyya sect, exaggerated the superhuman powers of interpretation of the Imam into divine knowledge, equal to that of the prophet. Later on, under the Abbasides, still other extremist Shia sects further exaggerated the divinity of their Imams.

2. General Religious Movement. The Shia religious movement was basically, political, and oppositional and was inspired by their belief in the charismatic leadership of their Imams. Though many Muslims under the Ummayyads sympathised with the claims of the *Ahl al-Bayt* to the Headship of the Islamic State, but the majority of them did not accept their charismatic powers of unlimited interpretation of the Quran. On the contrary, they believed that a caliph had only limited powers of interpreting the Quran and that even in the light of the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet and of his leading Companions, especially of Abu Akbar and Umar. At the end of the Umayyad period, the sunnah of the first two Caliphs, was supplanted by the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet, which became the Sunnah *par excellence* during all the subsequent ages.

The Umayyad Caliphs, however, never claimed to possess even limited religious powers of interpreting the Quran and the Sunnah. For every Muslim claimed to interpret the holy texts if he had diligently devoted himself to their study. Salvation, according to them, did not lie in following a charismatic leader, as the Shia believed, but by living the life in accordance with the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Such a Muslim becomes a member of the community of believers. The individual powers of limited interpretation led to the general religious movement.

Religious Discussions and Disputes. The general religious movement was the result of the discussions aud debates among various individuals and groups on questions of doctrine, law, etc. "The study of the Quran and the necessity of expounding it led to the study of philosophy and lexicography as well as to the science of tradition (Hadith)." In the early years of the Umayyad period there still lived many Companions and the sons of the Companions, the Tab'een, who were the first-hand source of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet. They were Abdullah bin Masud, Abdullah bin Umar I, Abdullah bin Abbas, and others. Then followed an ever-increasing seekers and searchers of Hadith, the traditionalists, as

for example, Hasan al-Basri, Sihab al-Juhri, Amir ibn Shurabil, al-Shabi, and Abu Hanifa.

From these disputes and controversies first arose various sects, such as the Shia, the Kharijis, and at the end of the Umayyad period, the Murji'ites and, finally, the Mutazalites, who differed among themselves on various questions of dogma and practice, such as different kinds of sins and their punishment, the Muslim community or Umma and the problems of law and doctrine, as the conditions, need and problems of the developing society of early Islam was confronted with new situations in course of its expansion and consolidation. At last these discussions began to crystalize into various centres of common belief or "ancient schools" as they came to be called in subsequent times.

"The Ancient Schools". These "Schools" existed in several centres or cities of the Umayyad Caliphate, among which Medina, Kufa, Basra, and Damascus were most important. Medina was the centre of the moderate Pietists, that is, the non-Umayyad and non-Alide descendants and supporters of the Companions of the Holy Prophet. They remained aloof from politics and quietly devoted themselves to the study of the Quran and the Sunnah. The centres at Kufa and Basra were more radical, while the one at Damascus was pro-Umayyad in its interpretations.

It appears that, in these centres, numbers of men met together probably in the mosques, to discuss religious questions of various kinds. At first these groups were interested in all types of questions of religion, but, gradually, some groups became more interested in the spirtual life and asceticism, others in doctrine, and still others in questions of law or in individual piety. At the end of the Umayyad Caliphate there was greater specialisation in these fields of interest, till they became distinct and separate disciplines. Thus at last, four distinct disciplines arose from the general religious movement, namely those of asceticism, doctrine, law and the *Ahadith*. These disciplines were, however, fully developed during the Abbaside period.

PART IV

THE ABBASIDE CALIPHATE

FULFILMENT AND DISINTEGRATION OF MEDIEVAL ISLAM

750 to 1258 A.D./133 to 656 A.H.

CHAPTER 49

INTRODUCTORY

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS OF ABBASIDE CALIPHATE

The Abbaside Revolution. With Abu'l Abbas as-Saffah came to power the Caliphate of the House of al-Abbas. It was not a mere dynastic change; it was a revolution in the history of early Islam, which affected all aspects of Islamic life, society, culture and civilization, arts and learning for all subsequent ages of Islamic History. In order to understand the nature of these changes in the subsequent history of the Abbaside Caliphate, we must first describe the nature of his Revolution, by delineating its chief characteristics and by contrasting it with the previous Umayyad Caliphate.

Chief Characteristic of the Abbaside Caliphate: Its Religious Character. While the Orthodox Caliphate was an Islamic theocracy, and the Umayyad Caliphate was a racial and nationalistic Kingdom of the Arabs, the Abbaside Caliphate was an Islamic Kingdom. The Abbaside Caliphs were self-proclaimed Defenders of Islam. As-Saffah, the first Abbaside Caliph, declared in his very first Khutbah in the Mosque of Kufa that he would rule according to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Indeed, all the Abbaside Chliphs prided themselves as the Imams, the Spiritual Heads or Pontiffs of Islam. They patronised the Ulema, the Muslim divines and theologians, consulted them on all occasions, political or legal, appointed them to high offices of the State and Law, and were often guided by them in the business of governance and adjudication. This was in great contrast to most of the Umayyad Caliphs who kept the Ulema at an arm's length. In short, the Abbasides laid great emphasis on the religious character and functions of the Caliphs. But their aim was political rather than spiritual. By emphasising the religious character of their caliphate, they sought to win unquestioning loyalty and support of all their Muslim subjects, whether Arabs, Persians, Turks or others. Their rule was for all Muslims, regardless of race or national origin. Thus their rule brought into forefront a new aspect of Islam, its universal aspect, as a religion for all races and nations of the Muslims and not of the Arabs alone as was the case under the Umayyads. So the Arab Empire became in practice what it was in theory since the days of the Caliph Umar, an Empire of all Muslims irrespective of their racial or national origin.

Ascendancy of the Non-Arabs. The Abbaside Caliphate lasted for more than five hundred years, during which it witnessed the ascendancy of various racial and national groups within its boundaries. First the Persian and then the Turkish influences dominated the Abbaside Caliphate. Of the earlier Arabian influence, it retained only two aspects, the Arabic language and the Islamic religion. But it acquired a very deep Persian influence in its administrative, cultural, intellectual and social systems. Later, the Turks influenced its military and feudal life, but it retained its Arabian and Persian influences in language, religion, administration, society and culture. The Umayyad Caliphate was based on the support of the Arab tribes, while the Abbaside Caliphate on that of the Mawali, especially the Persian Mawali. As the Arabic writer, Jahiz puts it, "The Empire of the sons of the Abbas was Persian and Khurasanian, that of the sons of Marwan Umayyad and Arab." Significantly enough, we no longer hear of Arab tribal feuds from the Arab historians. Although the Arab tribes continued to quarrel among themselves as ever, their feuds now did not produce any reaction or repercussion on the politics and government of the Abbaside Caliphate as they had done on the Umayyad Caliphate.

It was out of such diverse influences and races that the great civilisation and culture of Medieval Islam were built during the Abbaside Period, which determined the nature of Islamic thought and life of the Muslim peoples of the East down to the present days.

Persian Influence. The early period of the Abbaside Caliphate witnessed the ascendancy and influence of the Persians, not as a nation but as a people and culture. "Gradually" writes Hitti, "Persian titles, Persian wines and wives, Persian mistresses, Persian ideas and thoughts, won the day." The Abbasides even adopted Persian dress, manners and fashions. Indeed, Persia and the Persians regained the lost position and staged a come-back under the Abbasides, while the Arabs graduality lost their former pride of place, *i.e.*, their military, political and even cultural predominance. Several factors contributed to the Persian ascendancy, such as the support and loyalty of the Persian and Khurasani Mawali to the early Abbaside Caliphs, the employment of the Persian ministers and officials by them, the transfer of the seat of government from Damascus in Syria to Baghdad in Iraq which shifted the centre of political gravity of the Caliphate from a predominantly Arabian to a predominantly Persian environment, the Persian origin, on the mother's side, of some of the Abbaside Caliphs, the intellectual interests of the Abbaside Caliphs in which the Persians as scholars, savants and theologians excelled the Arabs in spite of the fact that Arabic, the language of science and learning, was not their mother-tongue. Wellhausen aptly remarks that "under the international Islam, Iranianism triumphed over the

Arabs." The Arabs retreated more and more into the background, that is, into the desert as the Persian, and later, Turkish influence became ascendant over the Abbaside Caliphate. The Persian ascendancy influenced the whole structure of the Abbaside society and state.

Abbaside State—a monarchical despotism. With the advent of the Abbasides, the governmental structure of the Caliphate became quite un-Arabian. It lost not only its tribal basis but also its democratic feature, which it had retained even under the Umayyads to a fair degree. On the other hand, it increasingly assumed the form of the old Sassanid absolutism. In this respect, Abbaside Caliphate reverted to the ancient pattern of oriental despotism which existed in ancient Persia before the rise of Islam. The Abbaside Caliph was an absolute, temporal ruler, no longer subject to the popular will. While the Orthodox Caliphs mixed with the people and ruled on terms of equality, and the Umayyad Caliphs behaved as the first among the equals in respect of their subjects, the Abbaside Caliphs kept themselves aloof from their subjects by surrounding themselves with their Wazirs, officials, army, court, and other awe-inspiring aspects of an absolutist royalty. A wide gulf divided the Abbaside rulers from the ruled. The people had no share in the government and politics of the Caliphate. They took interest only in trade, industry or agriculture. "The state shrank into the court", as Wellhausen put it. All political powers were concentrated in the hands of the Khalifa and his Wazir, especially under the later Abbasides, who relegated the business of the state into the hands of their Wazirs and civil and military officials. "The Wazir became the visible *alter ego* of the invisible Khalifa." Even the officials were organised into hereditary hierachy holding their offlces at the sweet will of the Caliph. Many of them were even former slaves and freedmen of the Khalifa. The Abbaside capital, Baghdad, was unlike Medina and Damascus, inasmuch as it was primarily built to station Khurasani and other loyal troops of the Khalifa and not to inhabit free citizens and tribes. Moreover, the public executioner was, next to the Wazir, the most important figure in the Abbaside court. "The Arabs" writes Wellhausen, "knew no executioner, and the Umaiyids kept none; with the Abbaside he was indispensable." The leather carpet beside the throne which served as a scaffold was part of the insignia of the Khalifat; sudden executions as well as deliberate barbarities enhanced the awe of his majesty. The pattern was taken from the Iranians whose Shah exercised the right of life and death over his subjects. From the Persians also the Abbasides borrowed the customs of employing court-astrologer and the postmaster as a spy of the Khalifa in the provinces.

In two respects, the Abbaside Caliphate was an improvement

upon the Umayyad Caliphate. The Abbaside Caliphs were efficient administrators. They brought greater order in the fiscal system which was a festering sore of the Umayyad rule, and in the administration of justice in which they took a special interest. They were always eager to dispense justice and redress the grievances of those who appealed to them as the supreme judges of Islam. But, though superior to the Umayyads in the administrative sense, the Abbasides were inferior to them in the moral sense. As Dr. Browne quotes the Arab historian al-Fakhri, "Know that the Abbaside dynasty was a treacherous, and faithless dynasty, wherein intrigue and guile played a greater part than strength and energy, particularly in its later days. Indeed, the later rulers of this House lost all faculty of energy and courage, and relied solely on tricks and stratagems."

A new political geography of Islam. The political geography of the Abbaside Caliphate was quite different from that of the Umayyad. First of all, the Abbasides did not succeed to the whole of the vast Umayyad Empire. They never ruled Spain, which remained in the hands of the Umayyads. They soon lost Sind, and were driven out of North Africa after a few decades of their accession to power. Thus the Abbasides ruled only a truncated Muslim Empire. This fact had far-reaching effects upon the political geography of their Empire. Driven out of the West, the Abbasides concentrated upon the East, that is, upon Western and Central Asia from Iraq to Khurasan. This fact also made them more Persians than Arabs. Iraq took the place of Syria as the seat of the Abbaside Government and home province of their Empire. At long last the Iraqis occupied the pride of place which the Syrians had had under the Umayyads. But this change also increased the influence of the Persians although as neo-Muslims or Mawali, they were only one among several other new converts of Islam, such as the Egyptians, the Berbers, the Syrians, the Greeks, etc. Similarly, this change in political geography of the Muslim Empire led to the growth and development of the great culture and civilisation of the Abbaside Caliphate in the eastern lands of Iraq, Persia and Khurasan and Central Asia. "It was also beginning to be evident" writes G. Le Strange, "that the conquests of Islam would, in the future, lie to the eastward towards Central Asia, rather than to the westwards at the further expense of the Byzantines." From this fact followed the reason why, after the decline and fall of the Abbaside Caliphate, Islam spread into Central Asia and into the vast subcontinent of South Asia.

Golden Era of civilsation and culture science and learning. Though morally inferior to the Umayyads, the Abbaside Caliphs were far superior to their great rivals in culture and intellect. "The age of conquest had passed; that of civilisation had commenced."

Al-Fakhri, as quoted by Dr. Browne, says, "Yet withal it was a dynasty abounding in good qualities, richly endowed with generous attributes, wherein the wares of Science found a ready sale, the merchandise of Culture was in great demand, the observances of Religion were respected, charitable bequests flowed freely, the world was prosperous, the Holy Shrines were well cared for, and the frontiers were bravely kept. Nor did this state of things cease until its last days were at hand......" To this extent, we may well describe the Abbaside Period as the Golden Age of Islamic History, especially during its first century or two.

Divisions of the Abbaside History. The history of the Abbaside Caliphate can be conveniently divided into two distinct, though unequal parts: (*i*) the Golden Age of the Abbaside Caliphate, extending from the establishment of their Empire to the death of the tenth Abbaside Caliph, al-Mutawakkill in 861, a period of a little more than a century. It was a period of peace and prosperity, and the age of great progress in science, arts and intellect. It was characterised by Persian ascendancy, and the dominance of the liberal Mutazilite doctrines. (*ii*) The second period was the Age of Decline and Disintegration of the Caliphate, which extended from 861 to 1258, when the nominal House of al-Abbas was destroyed by the Mongol hordes. This longer period was characterised by the dominance of the Turks, the gradual decadence and stagnation of intellect, science and society, the growth of religions orthodoxy, and the increasing disintegration of the Abbaside Empire, with the consequent rise of independent states and kingdoms in all the provinces of the Empire, from Khurasan to Qayrown. We have called this period as the era of nomadic-feudal or Sisyphean cycles in Medieval Islam.

CHAPTER 50

FOUNDATION OF THE ABBASIDE CALIPHATE

ABU'L ABBAS AS-SAFFAH, 132-137/749-54

Accession of as-Saffah. On his accession to power, Abu'l Abbas, assumed the title *as-Saffah* or the Avenger,[1] for he had vowed to avenge the martyrdom of the Alides at the hands of the Umayyads. "As they (the Abbasides) had not much to take revenge for, they borrowed from the Alides and acted as their avengers" However, their revengefulness was not out of any love for the Family of Ali but was an excuse to crush the fallen dynasty of the Umayyads utterly.

The extirpation of the Umayyads. As soon as as-Saffah had firmly saddled himself into power, he resolved to sweep away from the face of the earth the entire Umayyad clan, living as well as the dead, strange though it may appear. He appointed his uncle, Abdullah bin Ali, as the Governor at Damascus and instructed him to extirpate the Umayyads there. One night the Governor invited some ninety members of the Umayyad family to dinner. As previously arranged, before the meals began, a poet stood up to recite the cruelties of the Umayyad Caliphs, which roused the fury of the Abbaside attendants. They fell upon the unsuspecting Umayyads and put all of them to death. A carpet was placed over the dead and the dying bodies of the Umayyads and the governor and his guests sat to dinner amidst the ghastly scene of blood and groans of the dying Umayyads. Similar bloody scenes were repeated in Basra, Medina, Mecca and other places where Umayyads were still to be found. But as their fierce hatred could not be quenched by killing the living Umayyads, the Abbasides turned upon the dead ones. They dug the graves of all the Umayyad Caliphs, except those of Umar bin Abdul Aziz and Muawiya, and properly hanged their dead bodies on the gibbets. It is said that only Hisham's corpse was still in proper shape. It was whipped, hanged and then burnt to ashes. Having thus extirpated the male members of the Umayyad family, the Abbasides turned upon their womenfolk, who were, in the fashion of the day, sold or apportioned among themselves as slave-girls. In short, only the little children and one youngman, Abdur Rahman bin Muawiya bin Hisham, escaped

1. Present-day writers on Islamic History say that it was not as-Saffah but the later historians in the Middle Ages who gave him this title. See M. A. Shaban *The Abbaside Revolution*, p. 167.

alive from the barbarities of the Abbasides. He fled to North Africa and thence to Spain in 756 where he became the founder of the Umayyad Emirate of Spain.

Revolts in Syria and Mesopotamia. The revengeful cruelties upon the Umayyads roused the Arab tribes of Syria and Mesopottamia to revolt against the Abbasides, in Damascus, Hims, Qinnisreen, Palestine, Mosul and Harran. The revolts in Syrian cities were easily suppressed. But the Caliph had to send his brother, Abu Jaffar, against the rebels in Mesopotamia who suppressed them after a long siege of Harran.

Capitulation of Yezid bin Hubayra. Yazid bin Hubayra was Merwan's governor of Iraq, After his defeat at the hands of Qahtaba, he had retreated towards Wasit and had shut himself up in that city. After the defeat and death of Merwan at Zab, the Abbaside Caliph sent his brother, Abu Jafar, and Hassan bin Qahtaba with a large Khurasani force to attack Wasit. They laid siege to it, which lasted for eleven months. At last, despairing of further resistance, Ibn Hubayra offered to submit to the Abbaside Caliph upon a solemn oath of safety for himself, his family and followers. As-Saffan agreed to it under a solemn oath of amnesty, and Ibn Hubayra capitulated to his brother, Abu Jafar. But a few days later the Caliph sent two secret emissaries with orders to put Ibn Hubayra to death. He was slain along with his son.

Abu Salama's assassination 750 A. D. As we have said above, Abu Salama was the "Wazir" of the Abbasides in Kufa, and had been the leading personage to install them into power. He probably belonged to the Alide group of the Hashimiyya party, for which reason as-Saffah soon began to suspect his loyalty. In order to escape from Abu Salama's influence, as-Saffah transferred his court from Kufa to Anbar where he built a palace called Hashimiyya. On the suggestion of Abu Muslim, who wanted to remove a rival from his path, as-Saffah invited Abu Salama to dinner at night in his palace. While the "Wazir" was returning from the palace after the dinner he was waylaid and assassinated. His death was ascribed to the Kharijis, although most people knew that it was the doing of Abu Muslim's men.

Though Abu Salama was killed, the office he held, the Wazirate, remained ever after as an important institution of the Abbaside State. The principle of division of powers between the Caliph and the Wazir varied with the changes in the respective relationship of their personalities and historical position. When the Caliph was strong, the Wazir's position was weak; he became merely a sort of chief secretary to the caliph. But when the Caliph became weak or uninterested in the duties of his government for any reason, the

Wazir became strong. This was a factor in the stability and continuity of the Abbaside Caliphate for over five centuries. Thus an accidental or *ad hoc* arrangement of the Abbaside revolutionaries became an important and influential institution of the medieval Islamic State.

Death of as-Saffah : 9 June, 754. As-Saffah died at Anbar on June 9, 754. Before his death, he nominated his brother, Abu Jafar, as his successor, and his nephew Isa, as heir-presumptive. As-Saffah was a loving father and husband. But as a ruler, he was vindictive and revengeful. His chief concern was to safeguard the interest of his newly-established dynasty. For this purpose he committed every cruetly and was ready to perpetrate every treachery, even upon those who spent all their lives in the service of his dynasty, like Abu Salama. Thus as-Saffah set a very low moral standard in statecaft, which almost all his successors copied till the very end of their Caliphate.

ABU JAFAR AL-MANSUR 754-775/136-158

Accession of Abu Jafar al-Mansur. When as-Saffah died, his brother Abu Jafar, was in Mecca on pilgrimage. But Isa proclaimed him as Caliph in Kufa in his absence. On his return to Kufa, Abu Jafar ascended the throne and read the Khutbah in the Central Mosque of Kufa. He assumed the title of *al-Mansur*, the Victorious, by which he was henceforth known. He was really the elder brother of as Saffah. But he was passed over, for he was born of a Berber slave-girl, whereas Saffah was born of Arabian mother, a Yemeni lady. At the time ofhis accession, he was nearly forty years of age. He ascended the throne which was not yet fully secure, in spite of all the blood-thirsty cruelties of as-Saffah. Hence twenty-one years' region of Mansur witnessed many kinds of revolts and rebellions. But with the usual Abbaside mixture of war and treachery, cruelty and cold-blood murder, Mansur suppressed them all and built a strong, prosperous and well-administered state for a long time to come. This is the reason why he and not Saffah is regarded as the real founder of the Abbaside Caliphate.

Revolt of Abdullah bin Ali. When Saffah sent his uncle, Abdullah bin Ali, against Merwan to fight the battle of the Zab, he had promised to nominate him as his successor. Later Saffah made him the governor of Syria. The nomination and accession of Mansur dashed his hopes to pieces, and he revolted against Mansur. The new Caliph at once despatched Abu Muslim against him, who defeated Abdullah bin Ali in a well-fought battle near Nasibeen. Abdullah fled to his brother, Sulaiman bin Ali, who was then the governor of Basra, where he remained for a few years. When Sulaiman was removed from his post, Abdullah and his sons fell into Mansur's hands. With the characteristic Abbaside

duplicity, they were lodged in a specially constructed house with a lot of outward ceremony. The foundations of the house were, however built on salt, which melted when rains came and the crumbling edifice buried the unfortunate Abdullah and his sons under the debris. Thus ended the life of the man who had himself once sat feasting on the dead and dying bodies of the Umayyad princes.

End of Abu Muslim : 755 A. D. Mansur was since long apprehensive and jealous of the power and influence which Abu Muslim enjoyed in Khurasan So, in spite of his recent and past services to the Abbaside cause, he resolved to encompass his destruction, before he returned to Khurasan after his victory over Abdullah bin Ali at Nasibeen. While Abu Muslim was on his way to Khurasan, Mansur invited him to visit the Caliph. Suspecting foul play, Abu Muslim refused. When he reached Hulwan, more emissaries of the Caliph with promises of safe-conduct and royal favours, reached him. At last, he was persuaded to visit the Caliph. Mansur received him with outward signs of royal favour and honours. But the next day of his visit, the Caliph enquired Abu Muslim about the spoils he had captured from Abdullah bin Ali, such as his sword, his slave-girls, etc. Then growing angry, the Caliph charged Abu Muslim with the murder of Ibn Kathir and of ambition to become the equal of the Abbaside royalty. Then the Caliph, now red with feigned anger, clapped his hands, upon which five armed men burst out from behind a curtain and fell upon Abu Muslim and killed him.

Thus died the man who had served the Abbaside dynasty so long and so loyally. Really, there were no grounds for Mansur's suspicions. No doubt, Abu Muslim had grown powerful, but he had not become disloyal to his Abbaside masters. On Abu Muslim's murder, the Caliph received congratulations from his courtiers that now at last he had become the real king. There was a revolt by some of Abu Muslims followers in Khurasan, led by Sunbadh, the Magian, who regarded him as a prophet and a god. It was however, easily suppressed.

Character of Abu Muslim. Abu Muslim was a remarkable figure in the history of Islam. Though of servile origin, he became a king-maker due to his great talents. By overthrowing the Umayyads and installing the Abbasides into power, he brought about one of the greatest revolutions in the history of Medieval Islam. As Muir writes, "hardly thirty-five years old, he had by his rare wisdom, zeal and generalship, changed the whole outlook of Islam, and raised the house of al-Abbas upon the ruins of the house of Umeiya." He had qualities of head and heart. "The greatest event," writes Ameer Ali, "could hardly disturb the serenity of his countenance. He received the news of the most important victories without

expressing the least symptom of joy; under the greatest reverses of fortune he never betrayed the slightest uneasiness ; and when angered, he never lost his self-control." He could be both hospitable and generous, cruel and pitiless. Hating the pleasures of ordinary men, he knew how to evoke blind obedience and enthusiasm and devotion from his followers. He had a perfect knowledge of the strong and weak points of both the Arabs and the Persian Khurasanis. He exercised such a mysterious influence over the Persians that many of them regarded him as a prophet and even worshipped him long after his death as a god. "He united" writes Noldeke, "with an agitator's adroitness and perfect unscrupulosity in the choice of means the energy and clear outlook of a general and statesman, and even of a monarch."

Revolt of the Rawandiyya. An extreme Shia sect, called the Rawandiya, after the name of its town, lived in Khurasan. They considered the Abbaside Caliph as their god incarnate. Once in 759, a large number of the Rawandiyya sectaries surrounded the Hashimiyya palace and shouted, "It is the house of our Lord who gives us food to eat and water to drink." The Caliph was enraged. He ordered the arrest of two hundred of their leaders. This infuriated the sectaries, who attacked the palace. The Caliph had only a few soldiers to defend it. It was a critical situation, but it was saved by the loyalty of some of Mansur's officers. The sectaries were dispersed and the Caliph was saved from the rioters.

Search for a new Capital. Mansur never forgot his narrow escape at the hands of the Rawandiyya. He began to search for a new capital, where he would not be near the fickle and disloyal Kufans and riotous Iraqis. He found this place at an old market, called Suq-Baghdad by the Arabs. But hardly had he laid the foundations of the new capital when a serious Alide revolt threatened to topple over the Abbaside Caliphate. Its construction was, therefore, temporarily halted.

Alide Revolt of Muhammad and Ibrahim : 761-62/144-45 A.H. The Abbasides had come to power by duplicity. They pretended that they were fighting against the Umayyads in order to restore the caliphate to the rightful claimants, the Ahl-al-Bayt, or the Family of the Holy Prophet. The Alides, who had some following among the general masses, did not forget their double dealing. But they were themselves divided into several groups. The descendants of Imam Husayn, headed by Imam Jafar as-Sadiq, did not participate in politics. But the descendants of Imam Hasan, the eldest son of Caliph Ali, were resolved to fight against the Abbasides for the caliphate. They were led by two brothers, Muhammad and Ibrahim, sons of Abdullah bin Hasan II bin Hasan I bin Ali. Muhammad was also known as *Nafs-us-Zakiya*,

the "Pure Soul", for his noble character and virtuous conduct.

Mansur had long suspected Muhammad and Ibrahim of ambitious designs. In order to keep a watch on their activities, he sent a confidential servant as a spy to Medina where Banu Hasan dwelt since the battle of Kerbala. Mansur's agent wormed his way into the confidence of the Alide family and secretly reported their plans to Mansur. Convinced of their rebellious designs, Mansur ordered the arrest of the leading members of the Hasanide family, including Abdullah, the aged father of Muhammad and Ibrahim, who, however, escaped arrest. The arrested persons were taken to Kufa, imprisoned in the castle of Hubayra and barbarously tortured. Muhammad and Ibrahim who had escaped arrest, went into hiding. They were, however, hunted from place to place till in desperation they resolved to raise the standard of revolt. It was decided among themselves that Muhammad would rise into revolt at Medina and Ibrahim at Basra simultaneously. But the plan misfired. While Muhammad had revolted at Medina, Ibrahim could not complete his preparations for revolt at Basra, which he did some time later.

Muhammad's revolt in Medina was joined by a large body of the citizens. Mansur's governor was captured and imprisoned. In a short time, the whole of Hijaz and Yemen recognised Muhammad as the caliph of Islam. Fearing a general reaction in favour of the Alides in other parts of the Empire, Mansur resorted to conciliatory tactics. He wrote a letter to Muhammad offering pardon and large funds for maintenance if he would submit to the Caliph. Muhammad spurned the offer indignantly, remarking sarcastically that his pardon and protection might well be of the same kind as he gave to Ibn Hubayra, Abdullah bin Ali and Abu Muslim. Upon this Mansur wrote a long letter, in which he went into all those reasons on which the Abbaside laid their claim to caliphate. Indeed, this letter mignt well be regarded as the manifesto of the Abbaside dynasty. Mansur began with the Arab notion of the inferiority of women and declaimed that Fatima, being a woman, could not inherit the claim of the Ahl-al-Bayt to the headship of Islam. It, therefore, descended upon the Banu Abbas as the only male branch of the House of the Holy Prophet. He thus justified the Abbaside claim to rule the Empire of Islam on legitimist grounds. In order to clinch his arguments with the force of arms, he also sent his nephew, Isa, with a large force to attack Muhammad. When Isa appeared near Medina, most of his followers deserted Muhammad, who died fighting against heavy odds. His brother, Ibrahim, also raised the standard of revolt at Basra and soon won Wasit, Ahwaz and large parts of Persia to his side. Many people in Basra, including Imam Malik, supported him. His success even threatened Mansur's position in Kufa.

Fortunately for him, Isa had just then defeated and killed Muhammad and was able to ru^ch back to Kufa to save the Caliph in his extremity. Isa then marched against advancing Ibrahim, whom he defeated and killed in a battle at Bakhamra near Kufa on the banks of the Euphrates in Ramazan, 145 A. H., in the last days of the year 762 A. D. Mansur heaved a sigh of relief at his escape from a very critical situation. He then turned his attention to the construction of his new capital of Baghdad in order to live away from the tumultuous and fickle-minded populace of Kufa.

Foundation of Baghdad: 762-67. Mansur had commenced the search for the site of the new capital in 761. With a party, he sailed up the river Tigris and at last selected a site at a place called Suq Baghdad by the Arabs, which was in fact the summer residence of the ancient kings of Persia, some 48 kilometres north of their capital, al-Madain. The local peaple pointed out the salubrity of the place to the Caliph, who decided to build a palace and a barrack city for his troops on the spot. The construction of the new capital started immediately under the supervision of Khalid bin Barmak. But it was temporarily interrupted by the distractions of the Alide revolts. At last, its construction began in right earnest in 762 and was completed five years later in 767. The new city was built in a circular shape, about three kilometres in diameter, with the palace of the Caliph in the centre along with a Central Mo^sque beside it. Four roads at right angles radiated from the Caliphal Palace towards four gates of the Round City of Mansur, as it was later called. Two walls surrounded the Round City. The gates were especially brought from Kufa, Basra, Wasit and Damascus for this purpose. Around the Caliphal Palace were spacious grounds for military parades and reviews. Beyond the reviewing grounds were the offices of the Caliph's Wazir and others and the mansions of his officials. Near the walls were the bazars and markets, which were later shifted outside the Round City. The Round City was built on the western bank of the Tigris. Baracks were built for the three types of soldiers Mansur employed, the Khurasanis, the Modarite and the Himyarite Arabs. A few years later, a palace was built for the heir-apparent, Mahdi, on the opposite banks of the river, which came to be known as ar-Rusafa or Mahdiyya. Soon flourishing commercial suburbs sprang up around the Round City of Mansur and the Mahdiyya palace, which merged into the vast city of Baghdad during the subsequent history of the Caliphate. Mansur christened his new capital as *Madinat-as Salam*, the City of Peace, but it came to be popularly known as Begddad, the City of Justice, after its ancient Persian name. Its construction which lasted for more than five years, cost Mansur more than 2,00,000 dinars. As the later history of Baghdad abundantly proved, the site was well-chosen. Its gardens and farms were abundantly supplied with canals from the Tigris, while the river itself was navigable down to the Persian

Gulf which linked the new capital with South Asian sub-continent, China and Africa. By land routes, it was linked with Khurasan and Central Asia in the east, Asia Minor, and the lands beyond the Caucasus in the north and with Syria, Palestine, Arabia, Kufa, Basra and Egypt in the west and south. Militarily also, its central position enabled the new capital to hold Iraq, Syria and Persia in check and command the tumultuous cities of Kufa, Basra, Wasit and Damascus. Its central position soon enabled it not only to become a military and administrative centre of the Abbaside Empire but also the centre of trade and industry, science and learning of Medieval Islam.

Conquests under Mansur. The northern regions of Persia, named Tabaristan and Daylam, were semi-independent principalities under the nominal suzerainty of the Caliphs. Though a few Muslims had settled there, the bulk of the native population still followed their old Magian religion. In 758, the Prince of Tabaristan cast away the Arab suzerainty and murdered the Muslims in his territory. Mansur despatched an army against him under the command of his son, Mahdi, who crushed the rebellion and finally annexed Tabaristan to the Empire. He then marched on the neighbouring Daylam, which was similarly subdued and annexed, in 760.

Spain and Africa. In 763, Mansur made an ineffective attempt to re-conquer Spain from the Umayyad ruler, Abdur Rahman. He defeated the invading army and sent its commander's head to Mansur who was then at Mecca. The Caliph was forced to leave Spain to "the Falcon of the Quraysh" as he called Abdur Rahman. North Africa also remained a constant source of trouble for the Caliph owing to the Khariji rebellions and Berber discontent. Qayrowan was repeatedly lost and re-taken by the generals of Mansur. In 765, Mansur sent a general named Aghlab of Banu Tamim. He ruled for some time successfully, but died fighting near Tunis two years later against the Kharijis. His successor, Umar, held the post of governor at Qayrowan for three years, but died fighting when Qayrowan was besieged by the rebels. Enraged by these failures, Mansur sent a new governor, named Yezid Muhallabi, a man of indomitable energy ahd great administrative skill. He defeated the Kharijis and restored peace in North Africa. He ruled the province for fifteen years till his death in 786, when he was succeeded by his son, Daud.

Byzantine raids. Throughout Mansur's reign, at intermittent intervals the Byzantine Emperor raided Muslim territories in Asia Minor. The Christians raided, plundered and fled across the borders at the approach of the Muslim army. The Caliph sent an army under Hasan bin Qahtaba and forced the Emperor to make a

truce for seven years. The Caliph then repaired frontier fortresses, the *Amsars*, like Malatia, Massisa and other cities as a defence against further Byzantine inroads.

Revolt of Ustad Sis. The ruler of Herat, named Ustad Sis, posed as a prophet. He revolted in 768 and captured large parts of Khurasan and Sistan. The Caliph despatched Ibn Khusaima against him. Ustad Sis was defeated with great slaughter of his followers. He himself was captured and brought to Baghdad, where he was well-treated.

Nomination of Mahdi: Saffah had nominated his nephew, Isa, as the next successor after Mansur. But when Mansur's son, Mahdi, came of age, his father resolved to nominate him as his successor. Isa at first resisted but was at last coerced to postphone his own succession and accept Mahdi as the next successor. So in 764, Mansur nominated Mahdi as his successor.

Death of Mansur: In October 775, while on the way to Mecca for pilgrimage, Mansur fell seriously ill. Fearing his end was near, he summoned his son and successor, Mahdi, to his deathbed, and gave him an earnest and wholesome counsel on the obligations as a ruler: "Never allow a thing which has to be done to-day, to remain over for to-morrow. Associate with people from whom you can get good advice. Keep the people and the army contented. Never make your treasury empty. Never go beyonal the bounds of moderation in inflicting punishment. Concentrate your energy on your work. Defend the frontiers zealously. See that you make much of the men of Khurasan, for they verily have expended their lives and means on our behalf." Then he bade farewell to his son sorrowfully and proceeded towards Mecca. When 5 kilometers from the Holy City, he breathed his last. He was then sixty-five years of age and had reigned nearly twenty-one years. One hundred graves were dug for him. But he was secretly buried in one of them, lest a future revenge-seaker might not desecrate his dead body as the Abbasides had done to those of the Umayyads.

Charactor of Mansur. European writers as usual depict Mansur's character in darkest colours. Muir describes him as a treacherous and cruel man, and cites the murder of Abu Muslim and Abdullah bin Ali as examples of his perfidy. Ameer Ali too calls him a despotic monarch. But the character of Mansur was not so dark as it is painted, especially when we keep in mind the troubled times in which he lived. The Abbaside Caliphate was yet in its infancy, its enemies were numerous and influential, and its rivals powerful. As a Muslim, Mansur was strict and exemplary. Nothing indecent or profane was seen at his court. As a father, he was loving and devoted to his family and children. As a ruler,

he was able, energetic, conscientious and frugal. Only in regard to the interest of his dynasty and safety of his empire, he was unscrupulous. He loved to dispense justice and was ever willing to be tried by the law-court in ordinary manner like ordinary litigants. Once some camel-owners complained against the Caliph to the Qazi of Medina. Being summoned by him, the Caliph appeared before the Qazi who ordered the Caliph to pay damages to the plaintiffs. On a later occasion, Mansur acknowledged the independence and integrity of the judge and rewarded him for the same. Like Hisham before him, Mansur was most careful in matters of state-revenues which he carefully scrutinised to the last dirham and danik (a paisa), for which reason he was nicknamed as "Abu'd Dawanik"—the father of paisas. He left a well-filled treasury, the contents of which, as he said to Mahdi, were enough to last for ten years. Mansur kept his governors under strict check. His administration was firm and good. As a politician and statesman, he was almost unrivalled in his times. He was diligent in the business of the State, for which purpose he carefully scheduled his daily life. He got up early in the morning. After morning prayers, he devoted, as Ibn al-Athir writes, the greater part of the forenoon to issue orders, consider measures for safeguarding of frontiers of the Empire and protection of the roads, the improvement of the conditions of his subjects and the scrutiny of the public revenues. During the day he reviewed his troops, etc. He spent the afternoon with his family and children. After evening prayers till late at night he once again devoted himself to the business of the State, consulting his ministers, and distening to or dictating orders to his officials. Retiring late at night he rose early for the morning prayers.

Mansur's place in Islamic History. Mansur, and not as-Saffah was the real founder of the Abbaside Caliphate. He suppressed the rivals of his dynasty, like Abu Muslim and others. He crushed the Alide insurrection which threatened to overthrow the Abbaside rule. He established a firm and strong administration, based not on racial or tribal affinities and exclusiveness, as that of the Umayyads, but on ministers, katibs and officials who were selected by the Caliph himself. They became the hereditary hierarchy of the Abbaside bureaucracy. It was in this way that the Barmakides rose into influence and power, especially after the death of Abu Muslim. The administrative system, based on selected, hereditary official hierachy, remained throughout the Abbaside period. The only change introduced by the Caliphs later on was to employ their own slaves and freedmen more and more as their officials and scribes. Furthermore, Mansur re-unified the Muslim Empire from Khurasan to Qayrowan. He could not regain Spanish province of the Umayyad Empire. Moreover, Mansur was the first of the Abbasides who laid their claims to caliphate on spiritual or sacerdotal grounds. He proclaimed himself as a spiritual Head of Islam,

guided by the *Shari'at*. Lastly, he increased Persian influence. He was devoted to Persian learning.

He was also the first Abbaside caliph to re-establish the big feudalism of the type that existed under the Umayyad Caliph Hisham. It was of the type of financial exploitation of the royal estates. It became a model for later Abbaside caliphs.

Beginnings of Islamic culture, science and learning. Mansur's reign was the beginning of the Golden Age of the Abbasides. Though politically, Persian influence was visible under as-Saffah, but Persian ascendancy in social, intellectual and literary life of the Caliphate began with Mansur. His court was crowded with Persian scholars, Magian doctors or physicians and officials. The aristocratic Persian family of the Barmakides became influential under him. These ministers, officials, scholars and physicians brought Persian and eastern sciences, arts, philosophy and manners into the court of the Caliphs and gradually ousted the proud but unadapting Arabs from there. Moreover, the Persian manners, dress and fashions, like wearing of the tall Persian Qalansuwa, were also introduced in the Abbaside society in Baghdad.

Persian and, to lesser extent, Indian learning began to influence the Abbaside peoples. The blue-blooded Arabs who had hitherto looked with contempt upon the sciences, arts and learning of their erstwhile subject nations, were now fast sinking to a lower level in the court, politics, army and administration of the Abbasides. This change had yet another effect on the intellectual life. Unlike the Arabs, who relied on memory and oral tradition, the Persians relied on written or recorded tradition. Hence all branches of science and learning, both Islamic and secular, such as the Muslim Law and Jurisprudence, history, literature, medicine, astronomy, etc., began to be studied and recorded. As most of the books of science and arts were in foreign languages, like Greek, Persian and Sanskrit, the work of their translation soon began. Mansur is said to have set up a bureau of translation. Thus during Mansur's reign the foundations were laid down for the development of the intellectual life in subsequent days.

CHAPTER 51

AL-MAHDI AND AL-HADI

AL-MAHDI 775-85/158-169

Accession of Mohammad al-Mahdi. On Mansur's death, his son Muhammad, surnamed al-Mahdi, ascended the throne. His reign was in some contrast to his father's. He was generous and just and was very strict in matters of religion. He improved the postal service. Being a devout Muslim, he built rest-houses, wells and reservoirs on the road to Mecca. He also rebuilt the Mosque of the Hoy Prophet and the Haram of Mecca, and placed guards on the road to the Holy Cities for the protection of the pilgrims. He opened the doors of the prisons to all but the worst criminals. Mahdi was generous to the extreme ; he lavishly distributed treasure whenever on pilgrimage to the Holy Cities. In Medina, he recruited 500 Ansars as his bodyguard. If his successors had continued this practice, it would have proved a very good check to the Turkish slave-soldiery of later times. During his reign, Baghdad became the commercial centre of the Empire. Music, poetry, literature and philosophy also began to flourish in it. Morals of the capital became lax and luxurious.

Persia becomes a Land of Heresies and Revolts. Throughout the Abbaside period, Persia remained a hotbed of religious heresies and political troubles and revolts of economico-religious origins. They were caused by the recrudescence of the pre-Islamic religious movements of Mazdak and Manes, who lived in the Sassanian times. They preached such nihilistic doctrines which "loosened the bounds of society, weakened the reins of authority and afforded unlimited licence to the passions of man." The Sassanid kings suppressed Mazdakism or Manichaeanism with fire and sword, yet it survived underground in certain remote parts of Persia, like Khurasan. During the early part of the Islamic rule in Persia, the Mazdakite doctrines also remained dormant. But at the end of the Umayyad rule they began to revive and spread among the Persian people once again.

In ancient and medieval times, the only way a people could express their social, economic and political grievances and discontent was by means of a religious movement, led by a religious reformer or a *Messiah*. Persia was then a land of the peasants who were oppressed and impoverished by the excessive taxes and exploitation

of the Umayyad rulers and Persian Dihqans or feudal landlords. These peasants were both Muslims and Magians, or Zoroastrians. Abu Muslim skilfully channelled their resentment against the Umayyads and roused them into a revolt against them. When the Abbasides had won victory over the Umayyads, they were no longer in need of the support of the diverse elements which supported their cause, such as the Magians, the extremist Shias and the like. With the Abbaside victory the alliance was broken and its various elements split up into several rebellious groups, each with its own queer mixture of religious beliefs and practices. They believed in the incarnation of diety in human form, the Return of the Imam, and the metempsychosis. They practised community of wives and property. In fact, their beliefs were a quaint amalgam of Magianism, Mazdakism, Islamism of the Extremist Shia type and even of Hinduism. These beliefs, as Dr. Browne says, "appear to be endemic in Persia, and always ready to become epidemic under a suitable stimulus". The oppression and improverishment of the Persian peasantry was a genuine and general stimulus. These oppressed and improverished peasants were ever-ready to follow any religious reformer or imposter who would free them from the exploitation and injustices of the existing social order. This was how the leaders of these heretical movements always gathered thousands of followers and fighters around them. The immediate cause or stimulus was the murder of Abu Muslim, which became the first occasion of the heretic movements and revolts in Khurasan, as we have seen, during Mansur's reign. There arose waves after waves of these religious heresies and politico-economic revolts during the Abbaside period.

The first wave of revolts was under the leadership of Sunbadh the Magian and Ishaq the Turk, who were the partisans of Abu Muslim. They revolted to avenge his murder by Mansur, but were crushed by the Caliph's armies. Under Mansur, also, occurred the Rawandiyya revolt. The Sunbadh revolt was a Magian revolt, but the Rawandiyya sect was an extremist Shia sect who regarded the Caliph as a god. It was a strange mixture of Mazdakism and Hinduism. We have already described them. The second wave of heresies began under Mahdi, as we shall presently describe. The third wave came during Mamun's reign, which was led by Babak, and others. Lastly, in later times began several heresies, like those of the Carmathians, the Ismailis, the Assassins, etc., which we shall deal in subsequent chapters.

Revolt of al-Muqanna and the Zanadiqa. During Mahdi's reign appeared one of the most dangerous heretical leader, named Hashim bin Hakim. In spite of his Arabic name, he was a Persian and dwelt near Merv. He taught his followers that God appeared before mankind from time to time in human form. The

first appearance or incarnation of God was Adam, then Noah, Abu Muslim and finally himself. Being a god, he covered his face with a mask of gold; hence he was called al-Muqanna, the Veiled. He veiled his face, according to his followers, to conceal its divine beauty, but, according to his enemies, to hide its repulsive ugliness. He claimed to perform miracles. For instance, he bewitched the people by his moon-miracle at Nakhshab. A large multitude of men and women, Magians and Muslims, Persians and Turks, gathered around him in Khurasan. He made Bukhara his centre and stronghold, from where he resisted Caliphal armies sent against him and even repulsed them several times. At last, after several years of war, in about 780, an army under Said al-Harashi defeated Muqanna's multitudes of warriors. He fled with 2000 men into a nearby fort, where at last finding no way of escape he performed, as it is said, his last 'miracle'. He poisoned his women to death and himself jumped into a great fire along with his men in order to ascend to the heaven. Long after his death, many of his followers believed that one day he would return unto them and make them the lords of the earth.

Persecution of the Heretics or Zanadiqa. Al-Muqanna's followers were called the Mubayyizza, or "the white-clothed", for they dressed themselves in white. At the same time, another heretical sect sprang up in Jurjan, near the Caspian Sea. It was called the Muhammira, for its followers clad themselves in red-coloured clothes. Their beliefs and practices were not much different from other Persian heretics. All these heretics were called the *Zanadiqa* (Sing. *Zandiq*, an unbeliever). They repeatedly revolted against the Abbaside government. Caliph Mahdi, who was a devout Muslim, showed no mercy to these heretical Persian sects. He persecuted them with fire and sword, and crushed their risings and revolts. Al-Muqanna's white-clothed followers were defeated and crushed during 775-85, while the red-clothed Muhammira were suppressed during 778-79, in the reign of Mahdi's successors. In order to persecute these heretics properly, Mahdi established a department of the State, called the *Diwan al-Zanadiqa.* He placed it under an official, called the *Sahib az-Zanadiqa.* He was a sort of inquisitor. He inquired into the beliefs of the persons suspected of heresy, and punished them accordingly.

War with the Byzantine. Relations between the Byzantine and the Abbaside Empires remained strained from the very beginning. During Mahdi's reign, the Byzantines constantly raided Muslim territories in Asia Minor. The first raid occurred in 780, when the Greeks captured and burnt to ashes the border town of Maraash. When the Muslim army under Hasan bin Qahtaba marched against the Greeks, they fled across the borders. Sometimes later the Greeks again raided. This time Mahdi himself marched against

them, and made Aleppo his operation base. He sent his son, Harun, along with Yahya bin Khalid, Isa bin Musa and others against them. They took several Greek towns. A few years later, in 785, the Greeks again invaded Muslim lands. Once again Harun marched against them. He penetrated into Greek territory as far as their capital, Constantinople. The approach of the Muslim army so frightened the Greek empress, Irene, who then ruled the Byzantine Empire, that she made peace with the Muslims, agreeing to pay an immense annual tribute and also provided guides for Harun's army on its return march. The Caliph was so pleased with his son's exploits that he conferred upon him the title of "ar-Rashid."

Nomination of Musa and Harun. Mahdi had several wives and concubines. One of his concubines was named Khaizuran, probably the daughter of Ustad Sis, the rebel-chief of Herat, captured in Mansur's days. When Mahdi became Caliph, he set her free and thus made her his wife. She had great influence over the Caliph. She had two sons, Musa and Harun. Mahdi nominated Musa as his successor in 776 and Harun in 782. In the last days of his life, under Khaizuran's influence who had greater liking for Harun, Mahdi tried to remove Musa's name from succession, but failed.

Mahdi's Death. He died suddenly in August, 785, while on his way to Jurjan to argue and persuade Musa to withdraw his name in favour of Harun. It is said that his death was caused by eating a poisoned pear with which one of his slave-girls intended to kill a favoured rival. According to another version, his death was caused by a horse-fall while ahunting on his way to the East to meet Musa who was then in Jurjan. Mahdi was a mild and popular ruler, a devout Muslim and a generous-hearted person.

MUSA AL-HADI, 785-86

Accession of Musa al-Hadi. After the death of Mahdi, Harun who was with his father at the time of his death proclaimed Musa-al-Hadi as Caliph. At the time of his accession, Hadi was twenty-four years old. He ruled only for about two years. In most matters, he wisely continued the policy of his father, Mahdi. For instance, he persecuted the Persian heretics, the Zanadiqa, as actively as his father. Few important events occurred in his brief reign. Two of them are mentioned here.

Loss of Maghrib al-Aqsa. Owing to the ill-treatment of the governor, an Alide revolt occurred in Medina. It was headed by Husayn bin Ali of the Banu Hasan and was severely repressed. The governor had charged the Alides with drunken rowdiness.

After crushing their revolt, the governor arrested several of them. But one of the Hasanides, named Idrees, a brother of Muhammad an-Nafs-az-Zakiya, escaped from Medina and fled to Egypt and thence to Tangier in the Far West or Maghrib al-Aqsa. The Berbers who resented the Abbaside rule, welcomed him and helped him in founding an independent kingdom of al-Maghrib with Tangier as its capital. Thus the Far West was, also, lost to the Abbasides.

Breach with Khaizuran. Khaizuran, the mother of Hadi, endeavoured to exercise the same influence over her son as she had over her husband, Mahdi. But Hadi resented her interference in matters of the State. The relations between the two were strained from the very beginning of Hadi's reign, as she had tried to prevent Hadi's succession to the throne in favour of Harun. After his accession, Hadi put into prison Yahya bin Khalid Barmaki and others for favouring Harun's succession. The Caliphal court was split into two parties—one of the Caliph and the other of his mother and brother. Finding his personal safety in danger, Harun went away from the capital. Hadi nominated his son, Jafar, as his successor in place of Harun.

Hadi's death. While the quarrel in the royal family was yet undecided, Hadi was taken seriously ill. He sent for his mother and sought her pardon. He also directed that Harun was to succeed him. He died at the end of 786 A. D. According to another version, Hadi was smothered to death by some of his slave-girls on the instruction of his mother. During his reign and that of his two successors, Persian influence and fashion reached their height. An anti-Arab party, called *al-Shu'ubiyya*, came into being among the non-Arabs, especially among the Persians.

CHAPTER 52

THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE ABBASIDE

HARUN AR-RASHID 786-809 A.D./170-193 A.H.

Accession of Harun ar-Rashid. The death of Hadi opened the way for Harun ar-Rashid to the throne. He hurriedly returned from self-imposed exile to the capital to be proclaimed as Caliph without any opposition from Hadi's son Jafar, who was perhaps too young to press his claim. Khaizuran also played her part in the accession to the throne of her favourite son. Indeed, Hadi's early death saved the Abbaside Caliphate from the danger of a civil war and disintegration.

At the time of his accession, Harun was about twenty-five years of age. With him opened the Arabian Nights period of the Abbasides, characterised by its brilliant court, its immense wealth, its liberality and munificence, the talent and beauty of its men and women, free and slave, its dramatic changes of fortune, its courtly intrigues and nocturnal tours of the Caliph, attended by his Wazir and his public executioner to dispense summary justice on the spot. All this we find depicted vividly in the stories of the Thousand and One Night, which had made the name of Harun ar-Rashid so famous throughout the ages and have cast a lustre on his reign, which it otherwise might not have.

The Rule of the Barmakides. Like several other great monarchs of the East, the youthful Harun did not assume the reins of government into his hands during the early years of his reign. He left the administration in the hands of the Barmakides, headed by Yahya bin Khalid, who was appointed as the Wazir. For about seventeen years, the Barmakides held this high office of trust and power and fulfilled its duties with wisdom and ability. They, indeed, became the virtual rulers of the Caliphate while the Caliph devoted himself to royal tours or military expeditions, patronage of science and learning, law and religion or to pageantry and pleasure.

The family of the Baramika, as the Arabs called the Barmakides, originated from a man known as Barmak. It was really the title of the high priests of the famous fire-temple of Balkh, before it was conquered by the Arabs in the reign of the Umayyad Caliph, Walid I. At that time, a son was born to Barmak who became a

Muslim with the name of Khalid. Like many others in Khurasan, Khalid became an ardent champion and a leading supporter of the Abbaside cause and played no small a part in the Abbaside Revolution of the Abu Muslim and as-Saffah. As-Saffah and Mansur appointed Khalid bin Barmak to several posts of trust and power. Later, Khalid's son, Yahya also remained high in the trust and confidence of the Caliphs. During Mahdi's reign Yahya supported Khaizuran in her attempt to make Harun the sole successor to Mahdi. While yet a child, Harun was entrusted to Yahya to be educated by him. For this reason, Harun used to address Yahya as "father". Harun grew up in the family of Yahya as a playmate of his son, Jafar. During Hadi's reign, when relations between the two brothers, Hadi and Harun, became strained and Hadi intended to nomitate his son as his successor, Yahya pleaded Harun's case. For this reason he was thrown into a prison by Hadi. Soon after Hadi's death, Harun appointed Yahya as his Wazir with these words: "My dear father, it is the blessings and the good fortune which surround you and it is by your excellent management that I sit on the throne to-day, so I entrust to you the direction of the affairs of the State."

Yahya had four sons, named Fazal, Jafar, Musa and Muhammad. All of them were men of great ability and administrative skill. Yahya's administration was "wide, firm and benevolent; no detail was neglected and the well-being of the people was made a primary duty." He became the virtual ruler. He controlled all administration, appointed all officials and directed all affairs. All people looked to him and to his family for official appointments and favours. Poets, scholars, divines and writers assembled in the court and palace of the Barmakides which rivalled that of the Caliph in their brilliance, wealth and liberality. When the aged Yahya bacame too old to discharge his duties, his eldest son, Fazal, succeeded him as the Wazir, with the consent of the Caliph. The people called Yahya the "greater Wazir" and his son "the lesser Wazir."

Historical Significance of the Barmakide ascendancy. The rule of the Barmakides produced two subtle but far-reaching effects on the Abbaside Caliphate. Firstly, it enhanced the Persian influence to the utmost degree. In fact, it Persianised the Abbaside Caliphate, a feature which it retained till its very end. Secondly, the Barmakides also introduced the element of kingly absolutism which is so dear to the Persian heart. But it was a feature alien both to the democratic sentiments of the Arabs and the prestine spirit of Islam. The Barmakides placed themselves in between the Khalifa and the people, with the result that he retired more and more into the magnificent but awe-inspiring aloofness of his Imperial Court, and Harim, surrounded by his hereditary officials, soldiers, favourites and slaves.

This fasct soon produced another result. Cut off from his people, the successors of Harun and Mamun, soon became the puppets in the hands of their powerful Wazirs. Harun and few of his immediate successors were strong enough to retain effective power in their hands. But those who came after them were not. They became playthings in the hands of their Wazirs or generals, and the Imperial Court became a hotbed of intrigues and conspiracies among them, with the reigning Caliph as a puppet in the hands of the successful person or party. This opened the door to the Turkish commanders and other adventurers to acquire power over the Abbaside Caliph and to rule in his name. Lastly, the rule of the Barmakides was a mixed blessing. In spite of their wisdom, ability and intellectual talent, they were corrupt rulers, who amassed wealth by increasing taxes and extorting presents, etc., from the common people. This had a demoralising influence on the whole administrative machinery of the Abbasides. It made their officials corrupt and grasping.

Loss of North Africa. Harun's reign witnessed further drifting away of the western provinces from the Abbaside Empire. Spain and al-Maghrib had already seceded from it. The province of Qayrowan did so during Harun's reign, in spite of the Caliph's attempts to retain it. It was ruled by Yezid bin Haisam Muhallabi since the days of Mansur. But Yezid died in 787, when troubles broke out soon after. Harun appointed Ruh bin Haisam, the brother of the former governor, who successfuly ruled the province for several years. When he died, troubles broke out afresh. Thereupon Harun sent a renowned commander, named Harthama, to suppress constant Berber revolts. He restored peace and ruled North Africa for three years, when in 797 he resigned and returned to Baghdad. His successor proved to be a complete failure, so that the Qayrowan province became a financial burden upon the Caliphate. The Caliph appointed a new governor named Ibrahim bin Aghlab. He offered the Caliph to pay an annual tribute of 40,000 dinars provided the government of the province was permanently bestowed upon him. Harthama also advised the Caliph to accept the offer. In this manner the province of Qayrowan became virtually an independent kindom under the Aghlabids.

Tribal wars in Syria. Although the Arab tribes had lost their empire, they had still learnt nothing or forgotten nothing. They were still at their old, old game of tribal feuds and wars, especially in Syria. A fierce tribal war broke out among the Himyar and Modar tribes of Syria, which kept Damascus and other Syrian towns in turmoil for about two years, 792-93. The Caliph, who knew well the hostility of the Arab tribes towards the Abbaside dynasty, did not try to pacify their quarrels. In fact, he wanted the Arab tribes of Syria to stew in their own juice and weaken them-

selves by their mutual quarrels and killings. It was long after, when fighting again broke out among them, that the Caliph intervened and reconciled the quarrelsome tribes. A revolt in Mosul in 796 was crushed and the Caliph ordered the walls of the city to be pulled down.

Harun's Frontier Defence Policy against the Greeks. Harunar-Rashid was brought up in the traditions of jihad or holy war against the Byzantines. As we said above, he had so to say won his spurs in his march on the Byzantine capital in the days of his father, Mahdi, who conferred upon him the title of 'ar-Rashid' as a mark of his appreciation. Indeed, Harun spent his youth in the frontier wars with the Greeks. When he became Caliph, he took special interest in strengthening the frontier defence against them. He lived in Baghdad very little, for most of his time was spent at ar-Raqqa, a place on the upper Euphrates, near the borders of the Byzantine Empire. He separated these border regions from the provinces of Syria and Mesopotamia and created a new province of frontier regions, as the province of Awaseem or the frontier fortresses. He placed it under a military governor with Tarsus as his headquarters. By the way, the first military governor of the Awaseem was a Turkish chief. It is the first occasion we hear of the Turkish officers who played such a great role in the subsequent history of the Abbasides.

War with the Byzantines. Harun waged a life-long holy war against the Byzantines. They constantly violated solemn treaties with the Muslims and repeatedly invaded Muslim territories across the borders in Asia Minor, or incited their Khazar allies beyond the Caucasus to do so. In Mahdi's reign, the Greek Empress Irene had made peace with the Muslims on the condition of paying an annual tribute of about 70,000 dinars. For several years the Greeks kept quiet. But in 787, they broke their treaty and invaded the border towns. Harun, who had made ar-Raqqa his residence, himself directed the military expeditions against the Greeks. Even naval expeditions were sent against them. The islands of Crete and Cyprus were attacked and laid under tribute, in 791.

A few years, after in 797, a full-scale war began between the Greeks and the Muslims, led by the Caliph in person. Harun advanced into Asia Minor. He won several victories over the Greeks and captured Ephesus and Ancyra (modern Ankara). These victories compelled the Greek Empress Irene to sue for peace which was granted by the Caliph on the condition to pay a heavy annual tribute regularly.

A few years after, in 802, a court revolution occurred in Constantinople. The Greek courtiers, headed by the chancellor, named

Nicephorus, deposed Empress Irene and elected Nicephorus as the Emperor. The new Emperor at once repudiated the treaty Irene had made with the Muslims and renewed fighting. He wrote an insulting letter to the Caliph at ar-Raqqa :—

"From Nicephorus, the Emperor of the Greeks, to Harun, the Sovereign of the Arabs. Irene had parted with the castle and contended herself with the pawn. She paid you large tributes, the double of which you should have paid her ; and this was due to the weakness of women and their folly. Now when you have read my letter, either return the whole amount you received from her or the sword shall decide between us."

On reading this letter, Harun became red with rage. He at once asked for ink and pen and wrote on the back of the letter :—

"In the name of Allah, the merciful, the compassionate.

"From Harun, the Commander of the Faithful, to Nicephorus, the dog of a Roman. I have read your letter. As for the answer, you shall hear it, not read it".

The Caliph was true to his words. He at once took to the field at the head of a large army. The Muslims captured the border fortresses and advanced as far as Heraclea and Tyana. The boastful Greek Emperor met the Caliph at Heraclea, but suffered a heavy defeat. Nicephorus implored for peace and agreed to pay annual tribute. The Caliph accepted the terms and returned to ar-Raqqa. But no sooner did the Muslim army depart than the perfidious Emperor again invaded Muslim territory. The Caliph at once marched against the Greeks and again advanced far into Greek territory, as far as Heraclea. At last, the Greek Emperor sued for peace once more in 806, which was made on the condition that, in addition to the tribute, the Emperor as well as every member of his family paid a personal tax. "This event and date" writes Hitti, "in the reign of Harun al-Rashid may be taken as marking the topmost point ever reached by Abbaside power".

But Harun's victories proved futile. The Greek Emperor, once safe from invading Muslims, at once violated his treaty and renewed the raids on the border towns and fortresses. Thus, "over and again when Harun was engaged elsewhere, Nicephorus broke his treaty, and was as often beaten." Hostilities between the Greeks and the Muslims on the borders of their Empires became unending affairs. The only result of these wars, as Muir says, was to inflame religious animosity between the Christians and the Muslims. But they had two more results. These wars brought a large number of Greek slaves, so much in demand in the fash-

ionable families of the Abbaside society both as domestic slaves and concubines. Moreover, Harun's victories in the holy war against the Greeks, recorded in so many stories of the Arabian Nights and in the histories of the Arab writers, made the Caliph immortal, for they won him great fame and admiration among the Muslims.

Fall of the Barmakides. We now come to the most dramatic event in the rign of Harun ar-Rashid, the fall of the Barmsakides. For seventeen years the old Yahya bin Khalid and his son, Fazl had served the Caliph as Wazirs. The second son, Jafar, had been the playmate of Harun's childhood. He was now his boon companion, and shared in the Caliph's nocturnal pleasures. It is said that so intimate were the relations between the two that Harun invited his sister, Abbasa, to join the nightly carousals with him and Jafar. Then, suddenly one day in 802 A. D /187 A. H. Jafar was put to death and his aged father, Yahya, and his brothers, Fazl, the Wazir, and Musa and Muhammad were arrested and thrown into a dungeon. There the aged Yahya died heart-broken in 806, followed by his eldest son, Fazl, who died in 809. The immense wealth of the Barmakides, their palaces, gardens, fiefs and farms, and their huge treasures were confiscated by the Caliph's fiat. The body of the Caliph's boon companion was cut into three pieces; the head and one part of his trunk were stuck up at the two ends of a bridge on the Tigris in Baghdad, while the second part was stuck up at the end of the second bridge across the Tigris. These parts remained there in their pitiable condition for several years. One day, when the Caliph happened to pass over the bridge, he ordered the dried corpse of Jafar to be taken down and burnt to ashes.

Causes of their Downfall. The fall of the Barmakides has all the dramatic suddenness, mystery and queerness of the stories of the Arabian Nights. The dramatic effect of their fall is heightened by the fact that its causes are still unknown and mysterious. They have been debated by medieval and modern historians, but without any unanimity among them. As regards Harun, he never uttered a word why he had so suddenly and arbitrarily extirpated a family which had long served him and his Abbaside forerunners so faithfully and zealously. The causes which are generally agreed upon by most Arab and modern historians are the following:—

Love affair with Abbasa. As we said above, the Caliph used to invite his sister, Abbasa, to his nocturnal carousal with Jafar. In order to silence the evil tongues, he contracted a nominal marriage between Abbasa and Jafar, but expressly forbade any intimate relations between the two. Fate, however, willed otherwise. A child was born to Abbasa, the birth of which was kept secret from

the Caliph, while the child was sent from Raqqa to Mecca. After some time, the Caliph on pilgrimage came to know of the child's birth, which filled him with intense hatred for Jafar. So, when he returned to Raqqa, he ordered his executioner, Masrur, one night to cut Jafar to pieces and impale them at the entrances of the bridges of Baghdad. The story of the love affair with Abbasa, though deeply coloured with the usual Baghdad gossip, had some element of truth in it. At least it explains fully why of all the Barmakides, Jafar alone was singled out by Harun for his blind fury and execution. His father and brothers were only thrown into the prison where they were treated with consideration till further plots excited Harun's suspicions and jealousy of them. Only then they were subjected to tortures which caused the death of the aged Yahya and later of his son, Fazl.

Riches and power of the Barmakides. Ibn Khaldun does not give any credit to Abbasa's affair as a cause of the sudden fall of the Barmakides. He attributes it to the jealous and suspicious nature of Harun—undoubtedly a common trait of the Abbaside family, excited by the immense wealth, power and influence which the Barmakides had acquired during their days of power and authority. Ibn Khaldun has analysed various causes which excited Harun's jealousy and suspicions, such as the splendid palaces which the Barmakides had built in Baghdad and Raqqa; Yahya entering the Caliphal presence without authority; their munificence and largesse which earned them great popularity and influence among the learned, the scholars and the masses. "All faces" writes Ibn Khaldun, "were turned towards them; all heads inclined in their presence; on them alone rested the hopes of applicants and candidates, they showered their bounties on all sides, in every province of the empire, in the cities as well as in the villages; their praises were sung by all, and they were far more popular than their master."[1]

Their Anti-Abbaside activities. Although the death of Jafar and destruction of his family took place suddenly, the Caliph was, however, since long suspecting them of disloyal activities. As a matter of fact, Yahya's appointment as a Wazir was not only due to Harun's gratitude but also due to his mother Khaizuran's

1. Ibn Khaldun, indeed makes this event an issue of Muslim historiography, in which exaggerated story-telling played a great role. He cites the high political position and "spiritual" descent of Abbasa, besides her own noble and proud character and conduct as a refutation of her "marriage" story with Jafar, which makes these reasons implausible and therefore not acceptable. Instead, he gives the cause of their downfall as due, to their greed, political ambition and to financial control. In fact, Ibn Khaldun seems to say that Barmakides attempted to reduce the Abbasides to political but gilded nonentity as the Wazirs and Sultans did a century after. (cf. Rosenthalbe, *Muqadimah*, p. 30).

influence, who was a powerful patron of this Persian family. Khaizuran died two or three years after Harun's accession. Her death deprived the Barmakides of her powerful support and influence which they had through her on the young Caliph. As time passed, he began to suspect them of Alide sympathies and resented their great influence and popularity His suspicions were confirmed when an Alide offender escaped from the custody of Jafar. So Harun believed that they were plotting to overthrow the Abbaside. He destroyed them before they could do any harm.

Despotic character of the Abbaside Caliphate. After analysing all these causes, modern view has also to take into consideration the despotic character of the Abbaside Caliphate. It alone can explain adequately the dramatic suddenness and despotic thoroughness with which the Barmakides were swept off the pages of history by the secret fiat of an absolute ruler. It explains why Harun suspected the increasing authority and popularity of the Barmakides which would threaten the personal and arbitrary power of the Caliph. When, as Ibn Khaldun has rightly said, the Barmakides "seized upon all authority, and assumed the absolute disposition of the public revenue". when their influence became unlimited and when they controlled "all the high offices of state, civil as well as military." they became the possible rivals of the Abbasides. In a personal despotism as that of the Abbasides, no one could be the equal of the ruler without jeopardising the authority and safety of the ruler and his family. This is the real cause why Harun struck so silently, secretly and suddenly against the Barmakides. He was convinced that their political and dynastic ambitions must be nipped in the bud before they actually toppled over the Abbaside rule. A strange nemesis befell the Barmakides. It was they who had aided the Abbasides to build their arbitrary and absolute despotism. And it were they who, like Abu Muslim before them, fell victims to this despotism. They were, thus, hoisted on their own petard. Lastly, the Caliph was convinced in his suspicion of the anti-Abbaside activities of the Barmakides by Fazl bin Rabii and other enemies of this powerful family. They constantly filled Harun's ears with alleged plots and conspiracies by them against the Caliph. Whether true or not, Harun was convinced that the Barmakides had become a danger to his person and his throne and must be crushed. And crushed they were. They never regained their lost power and dignity afterwards.

Other minor events. The province of Daylam on the Caspian Sea fell into the hands of the Alides temporarily in 792. One of the brothers of Muhammad an-Nafs az-Zakiya, named Yahya fled from Medina to Daylam and captured power there. Thus an Alide kingdom was established so near Persia and Iraq that it threatened the safety of the Abbaside rule. Harun sent Fazl bin Yahya

Barmaki against Yahya, who was persuaded to visit the Caliph in Baghdad. At first Yahya was welcomed with marks of outward honour, but later was thrown into a prison, Thus ended the ephemeral Alide rule in Daylam. The Kharijis also revolted in Mesopotamia and Khurasan. but their revolts were suppressed without much difficulty.

Nomination of Amin and Mamun. On the day Harun ascended the throne, a son named Abdullah was born to him of a Persian slave-girl. A few months after another son, named Amin, was born to his wife, Zubayda, who was a grand-daughter of Mansur and therefore of royal blood. When Zubayda's son reached the age of five, he was nominated as heir-apparent with the title of al-Amin. A few years later, when Abdullah became twelve years old he was declared the next successor, with the title of al-Mamun. Though older than al-Amin. Mamun was placed next in succession due to his servile mother. Mamun was entrusted to the care and and training of Jafar bin Yahya the Barmaki. From his early life, he showed his great ability and talent. He was made the viceroy of Khurasan by Harun. Later Harun also nominated his third son, Kasim, as the third successor to the throne after Mamun, with the title of al-Mutamin. He was given the charge of the frontier province of the Awaseem on the Greek border. When on a pilgrimage to Mecca in 802. Harun caused a document, drawn in the names of Amin and Mamun, in which he solemnly recorded the order of succession and placed it in the custody of Ka'ba to prevent any breach of trust by Amin.

Revolt in Khurasan. In the last years of Harun's reign, a revolt broke out in Khurasan, led by Rafi bin Layth, a grandson of Nasr bin Sayyar. Ali bin Isa, the governor of Khurasan, was unable to restrain it. Soon Rafi captured all lands beyond the Oxus. The Khawarij also joined in this rebellion and captured the land to the south of the Oxus. The Caliph sent Harthama against Rafi, who defeated him in Samarkand after three years of fighting during 807-10. At last, the prolonged rebellions in Khurasan madet he Caliph also to depart from Raqqa for the East in 808.

Death of Harun. At the time of his departure from Raqqa for Khurasan, Harun was suffering from a serious disease. Journeying slowly towards the East he failed to reach his destination. He breathed his last at Tus near ar-Rai in Persia in March, 809.

Character of Harun. Mansur, Harun and Mamun were the three greatest Caliphs of the Abbaside dynasty. However, Harun does not fare well at the hands of the Western historians. "Harun" writes Muir, "though called *Rashid*, was as prone to vindictive cruelty, if moved to hate or jealousy, as any of his predecessors."

Nicholson writes, "Students of Moslem history will soon discover that 'the good Haroun alroschid' was in fact a perfidious and irascible tyrant, whose fitful amiability and real taste for music and letters, hardly entitle him to be described either as a great monarch or a good man. We must grant, however, that he thoroughly understood the noble art of patronage." We should, however. take a more judicious view of Harun's character. He might well be called severe and suspicious. Even his occasional outbursts of suspicion and anger, as Ameer Ali remarks, were the natural outcome of despotism. In spite of his despotic power, he exercised it with self-restraint and devoted it to the patronage of literature and science and to the promotion of happiness and well-being of his subjects. Though accustomed to palatial life from early youth, Harun often led the army against the Greeks and won many victories over them which earned him great fame. He was a strict Muslim and performed Haj almost every year. Harun's orthodoxy and liberality were well-known. "Harun" writes Ibn Khaldun, "followed in the footsteps of his grandfather, Mansur, except in parsimony for no Caliph exceeded him in liberality". In spite of his liberality and munificence, he left behind a well-filled treasury. But this was mainly due to the excessive and unscrupulous exactions of the Barmakides. He showed great energy and activity by constantly travelling all over his Empire for purposes of administration, war or pilgrimage. His administration was just and prosperous. His nightly tours in the streets of Baghdad to redress wrong and dispense justice on the spot have become well-known stories of the Arabian writers. His court was thronged with great poets, scholars, divines, and men of arts and letters. The Caliph was himself a poet. In short, as Ameer Ali says, "Weigh him as carefully as you like in the scale of historical criticism, Harun ar-Rashid will always take rank with the greatest sovereigns and rulers of the world."

The Age of Harun. Harun's reign witnessed the efflorescence of the Islamic culture and civilisation of the early Middle Ages. During his reign began the great age of Islamic law, literature, poetry and music, while foundations for a similar advance in science and philosophy were laid. His liberality and patronage were lavishly extended to poets, musicians, singers, divines and doctors of Islamic Law or Fuqaha, to scholars and physicians, who thronged his court at Raqqa or at Baghdad. "He was the first" writes Ameer Ali, "to elevate music into a noble profession, establishing degrees and honours, as in science and literature." Many great names in Arabic literature and poetry, song and music, in Islamic law and jurisprudence, and in science and medicine flourished in his age. They were, for instance, the poets Abu Nuwas, Abu'l-Atahiya, the ascetic poet of the market place, Dibil, Muslim bin Walid, and Abbas bin Ahnaf ; Asmai the grammarian, who was entrusted with the education of the Caliph's sons ; the singers and musicians

Ibrahim al-Musili and his son Ishaq ; the grammarians and philologists like Abu Ubayda, Kisai and Asmai, the preacher Ibn al-Sammak; the historian al-Waqidi; and the physician Jabril bin Bakhtiashu. In short the presence of such a galaxy of eminent men in his court and in Baghdad shed lustre on his reign. Moreover, the work of translation of foreign books into Arabic, which had began in Mansur's days, continued during Harun's reign as well, though not on the organised large scale and manner as under his son, Mamun.

"History and legend" writes Hitti, "unite in placing the most brilliant period of Baghdad during the caliphate of Harun al-Rashid (786-809)." Though at the time of Harun's accession, Baghdad was only 20 years old and was therefore still in its infancy, yet even then it had become a "city of palaces and offices", of mosques and bazars, pleasure-gardens and orchards. Among them the most magnificent were the palaces of the Caliph in the Round City and outside it, with the palace of the Barmakides coming next, which was confiscated by the Caliph after the fall of the Barmakides. Harun also built royal palace at ar-Raqqa on the upper Euphrates, where he preferred to dwell rather than in Baghdad. One third of the Round City of Mansur was filled with the royal palace and its innumerable annexes for harems, eunuchs and royal functionaries. The courtiers, official and the wealthy people in the city followed the example of the Caliph by building magnificent mansions, and indulging in extravagant luxury and in immense expenditure on amusement. All this, however, was amidst intense poverty and squalor in which the poorer classes of Baghdad lived. Poverty, famine, misery, disease and epidemics frequently stalked the land, while the Caliph and his wealthy entourage lived amidst great feudal luxury, extravagance and pageantry.

His Brilliant Court. The court life was brilliant. The Caliph spent, the day in the performance of state-functions and ceremonies. Harun's own audience chamber was adorned with the richest fabrics of the East, where he received foreign emissaries amidst great display of wealth and ceremony. Among these foregn emissaries were those who came from the Emperor of China, whose visit has been recorded by Arab annalists and an embassy from the Frankish king, Charlemagne, about which we know only from European sources, for the Arab writers are silent about it. It is said that the Franks returned home loaded with gifts from the Caliph which included elephants, monkeys and a bronze water-clock which was so contrived that when the hour struck as many horsemen as the hour came out of a door.

Along with the daily routine of state business, the Caliph and his court indulged in endless round of pleasures and luxury. Night

was usually reserved for such activities, for, as Yahya the Barmaki wrote to his son Fazl, "the day of prudent men begins at night and they merrily pass their time from evening to dawn behind the dark curtain of night so that spying rivals and censorious foes might not pry into their nocturnal affairs." The famous book, *Al-Aghani* and the poems of the libertine poet Abu Nuwas, the boon companion of the Caliph, have depicted for us in unforgettable terms the colourful life of Harun's court.

The magnificent court life of Harun had deleterious effect on his age and on the succeeding ages of Islam. Much of this culture and brilliance was wordly and frivolous. The court was steeped in petty jealousies and insensate rivalries, intrigues and hatreds which surrounded the Caliph, his Wazirs, officials and courtiers. Persian influence was supreme. Luxury and indulgence sapped the energies of the Caliph and of the ruling classes. We witness at the Court the ever increasing laxity of manners and morality. The slave-girls, whether as singers and dancers or as concubines and favourities, lowered the moral tone and caused social degeneracy in both the upper and the lower sections of the Abbaside society. So, for all its pomp and magnificence, Harun's reign showed the first symptoms of subsequent degeneration and decline.

Origin of Sunnism or Muslim Orthodoxy. The Abbaside Caliphs in general and Harun in particular were very strict in the observance of Islamic principles and rituals. "Whatever they might do or think in private, they wore the official badge of Islam ostentatiously on their slevees," as Nicholson writes. Harun loved to discourse on laws of Islam with the learned divines and scholars, who were in his patronage. It was in his reign that the Hanafi school of Muslim Jurisprudence or Fiqh acquired a systematic shape at the hands of his Chief Qazi, Abu Yusuf. He was a great disciple of its founder, Imam Abu Hanifa, who lived in the days of Mansur. The deference which Harun showed to the Muslim jurists and the encouragement which he gave to their judgments paved the way for the rise of Islamic Fiqh or Jurisprudence of the Orthodox Muslims, the Sunnis. Thus the evolution of Islamic law which had begun with Mansur, was continued under Harun's patronage.

CHAPTER 53

AL-AMIN AND AL-MAMUN

Golden Age of the Abbasides (Cont.)

AL-AMIN 809:13/193-98 A. H.

Accession of al-Amin. Harun ar-Rashid had eleven sons. One of them, Muhammad al-Amin was born of his cousin-wife, Zubayda, and the rest to his slave concubines. Like many other absolute rulers, he resolved to arrange succession in such a way as to prevent a war of succession among his numerous progency. So he nominated four of them as his successor. Being born of a noble mother, his second son al-Amin had precedence over others and was nominated as his immediate successor. He was to be followed by his eldest son Abdullah al-Mamun born of a Persian slave-girl. The third successor was to be Qasim al-Motamin, who was to succeed only with the consent of al-Mamun. Finally he nominated Abu Ishaq Muhammad al-Mutasim as the fourth successor. He further arranged that al-Amin was to be the Caliph at Baghdad, while al-Mamun would hold the sovereignty of Khurasan but would remain loyal to his younger brother, al-Amin. Qasim al-Motamin was similarly entrusted the governorship of the province of the Awaseem on the Byzantine frontier. In order to ensure that al-Amin would remain true to his father's arrangement, Harun recorded it in a solemn document, properly witnessed and signed, and entrusted it to the holy custody of Ka'ba. According to this document, al-Amin was bound to respect Mamun's rights, on pain of losing throne, while al-Mamun was bound to remain loyal to his brother.

After Harun's death, things at first went as he had wished them. Amin ascended the throne at Baghdad, while Mamun became the virtual ruler of Khurasan, where he was at the time of Harun's death, and Qasim ruled the Awaseem, with Qinnesreen as his head-quarters. But soon the relations among the three brothers became strained. Quarrels broke out which culminated in a civil war between Amin and Mamun, while Qasim al-Motamin was speedily done away by Amin. It was, indeed, highly presumptuous on Harun's part to believe that his unwise arrangement would be practical and lasting. He had, in fact, bequeathed an unhappy heritage to his sons, which sowed seeds of dissensions among them. Two factors in particular caused his unhappy arrangement to go awry. They were the ambitious machinations of Harun's Wazir,

Fazal bin Rabii, and the character and policy of the two brothers, Amin and Mamun.

Machinations of Fazal bin Rabii. Fazal bin Rabii was the chamberlain of Harun and was deep in his confidence. It was he who poisoned the ears of the Caliph against the Barmakides. He thus brought about their fall, from which he benefited most, for he virtually became the Wazir after them. He was an ambitious but unscrupulous person. He knew well the difference between the two royal brothers. He disliked the talented Mamun with whom his relations were not happy, while he preferred the pleasure-loving Amin whom he hoped to manage easily. So, when Harun died at Tus, Fazal bin Rabii, who was with the Caliph at that time, persuaded the royal troops to break their oath of allegiance to Mamun which they had taken on the instructions of the dying Caliph. He made them return to Baghdad along with the royal treasure. When Fazal bin Rabii reached Baghdad, Amin was so pleased with his work that he appointed him as his Wazir, while he paid a year's pay to the troops to cement their loyalty towards him. Mamun in Khurasan was naturally perturbed by the news of these events and the treachery of Fazal bin Rabii who had violated Harun's instructions regarding the troops and the treasure.

Character of Amin and Mamun. The two brothers were quite unlike each other in their character, habits and inclinations. Broadly speaking, Amin had inherited the pleasure and pageantry-loving instincts of his father, while Mamun had inherited his intellectual and philosophical qualities. Both of them were carefully educated and trained in the sciences, religion and arts of the day under specially appointed tutors. Amin was educated by his mother, the Empress Zubayda and her brother, Isa, while Mamun whose servile mother died while he was yet an infant, was entrusted to the care and education of Jafar bin Yahya the Barmaki. Though both benefited from their good training and education, Mamun however became proficient in all that he was taught and trained. Moreover, Amin was a weak, pleasure-loving, and indolent prince, while Mamun was a quiet, ambitious, talented and intelligent person. Lastly, Amin was an Arab both on his father's and mother's side, of which he was proud, while Mamun had Persian blood in his veins on his mother's side. He took full advantage of it, by winning the support and popularity of the Persians and the undercurrent of Persian hostility to the Arab rule. Thus the two royal brothers represented the two political tendencies in the Abbaside policy, the Arab *versus* the Persian, which came to a head in their Civil War.

Administration of Amin. Amin was a weak voluptuary who could be easily managed by such unscrupulous persons as his

Wazir, ibn Rabii. At first he endeavoured to abide by the solemn arrangements made by his father regarding his brothers. But he was soon persuaded by Fazl to tamper with them. Finding Mamun a hard nut to crack, Amin first tackled Qasim, whose authority was restricted. The Byzantine inroads and a Syrian revolt gave the Caliph enough pretext to depose Qasim from the governorship of the province of Qinnesreen. Nevertheless, the Byzantine attacks on the Muslim territories and the Syrian revolt led by a descendant of Muawiya I, continued, for Amin's administration was weak and inefficient.

Amin's love of pleasure and pageantry. Amin was more interested in endless pleasures and pageantry than in strong administration and in the defence of his Empire. He assembled around him an army of buffoons, jesters, jugglers, singers and songstresses, dancers and danseuses, slave-girls and a new variety of slaves, called *ghilmans* or the beardless boy-slaves. They were collected from all over the Caliphate for their physical beauty and the like. The Caliph spent huge sums upon them both for their purchase and their favours. To enjoy his festivities on the Tigris, he constructed five gondolas, each shaped as a tiger, a horse, a fish, an eagle and an elephant, costing 30 lakh dirhams each, He sailed in them on the Tigris in the company of his concubines, songstresses, buffoons and dancers. It is said that the pleasure-loving Caliph even invented "a Saracenic ballet", which Sir Syed Ameer Ali describes in these words: "A hundred beautiful girls, in splendid attire, decked with pearls and blazing with diamonds, danced in rhythmical unison to the soft harmony of music, advanced and retreated, waving palm-leaves, then breaking into groups (of ten) often formed a labyrinthine maze passing and repassing, turning and bending—a fairy circle of light and colour." But while the Caliph bemused himself with endless pleasures and buffoonery, events in Syria and especially in Khurasan under Mamun took an unfavourable turn. Fazl bin Rabii, alive to the danger of Mamun's victory over his Caliph, tried to rouse him from his carousals and negligence but to no avail.

Mamun's administration in Khurasan. While Amin in Baghdad abandoned himself to his "Saracenic ballets" and pleasures, Mamun was strengthening his position in the East and preparing for a march on Baghdad. Perturbed as he was by the treachery of Fazl bin Rabii, he found himself in a difficult position in Merv, for he was deprived both of troops and treasure. Khurasan was then disturbed by Rafi bin Layth's rebellion. But Mamun soon strengthened his position by his wise policy of conciliation and efficient administration. His principal adviser was Fazl bin Sahl, a recently converted Persian. He was a man of great ability. By his conciliatory policy, Mamun won the hearts of the people of Khurasan, both nobles and common citizens, Arabs as well as

Persians. The latter declared him as "the son of our sister". Harthama, who was fighting against the rebel Rafi, at last captured Samarkand, but Rafi came to Merv and submitted to Mamun who pardoned him. So peace and order were restored in Khurasan.

Strained relations between Amin and Mamun. Relations between Amin and Mamun became strained from the beginning of Amin's reign. His Wazir, Fazl bin Rabii, goaded him to this end for his own ulterior purposes. Fazl persuaded the Caliph to place his son's name before that of Mamun in the public prayers. Thereby he disputed Mamun's right to succeed him. Mamun retaliated by dropping Amin's name in public prayers altogether. Upon this Amin ordered his elder brother to appear before him in Baghdad, but Mamun refused to obey the Caliph's order. His refusal was a sufficient excuse for Amin to deny him the right of succession altogether. Egged on by his evil advisers, Fazl bin Rabii and Ali bin Isa, the Caliph at last, by the end of 810 A. D., nominated his infant son, Musa, as his immediate successor. He sent for the document, placed in Ka'ba, and tore it to pieces. This was a virtual declaration of war against Mamun, who retaliated by closing all avenues of communication between Baghdad and Khurasan. He thus declared himself to be an independent ruler of the East.

Civil War between Amin and Mamun. The breach between the two brothers was now complete. Finding that Mamun would not submit to his authority, Amin sent an army of 50,000 strong against him, commanded by one of his evil advisers, Ali bin Isa. The choice of this commander was most unwise. Ali bin Isa had been the governor of Khurasan in Harun's reign. He was hated by the people of that province for his oppression and tyranny. Mamun had already posted a small force of the Khurasanis under Tahir bin Husayn at Rai to guard the frontier. Tahir met Ali bin Isa near Rai and inflicted a defeat on the hated commander, who was slain and his huge army routed. In his message of victory to Maman, Tahir wrote laconically: "The head of Ali bin Isa is at my feet, his signet on my finger, and his army under my command". Amin despatched another army but it was bribed over by Mamun's agents to his side. Mamun now assumed the title of Ameer ul Momineen. His kingdom extended, as he proclaimed, "from Tibet to Hamadan, from the Indian Ocean to the Caspian Sea." He appointed Fazl bin Sahl as his Wazir over it, and took offensive against his brother. He sent two armies against Baghdad. One was commanded by his victorious general, Tahir bin Husayn, who had advanced from Rai to Hulwan, and the other commanded by the veteran Arab commander, Harthama. Leaving Harthama in command of the army which was to march from Hulwan to

Baghdad, Tahir took a more circuitous route towards the Abbaside Capital. He first marched on Ahwaz, in South Persia, and from there advanced on Basra and Wasit. He captured Wasit after defeating all the forces sent from Baghdad to stop his advance. At the same time other armies of Mamun took Yamama, Bahrayn and Uman and finally Hijaz. Syria was already in revolt, where two Umayyad pretenders were fighting against the Abbaside Caliph. But the old tribal rivalries of the Modar and the Himyar made them to quarrel between themselves; thus saving Amin from an Umayyad invasion from Syria. In the meanwhile, Tahir's wave of invasion rolled onto Baghdad. He had now become the master of whole of Arabia, and Iraq, and marched on Baghdad. It was now besieged by Tahir on its western side and by Harthama on its eastern side. Another commander, Zahur bin Musayb, also joined them in the siege of the capital.

Siege of Baghdad: 812-13. The siege of the Caliphal City lasted for a whole year, protected as it was by such strong natural defences as the river, the canals and fortifications, and especially by the people of Baghdad. In spite of his weaknesses Amin was very popular with the citizens, partly due to his Arab origin, partly due to his treasures which he lavishly showered upon them during the siege, but mainly due to the fear of Mamun's armies which consisted mostly of the hated Khurasanis and Persians. In spite of its proximity to Persia, Baghdad was predominantly an Arab city in race and tongue, and hated the Persian proclivites of Mamun, and of his generals, like Tahir bin Husayn al-Khuzai. He was a descendant of a Persian freedman and client of the Arab tribe, Khuz'a. Finding the city hard to capture, the besiegers began to raze it to ground systematically. They used ballistas and catapults to bombard it with stones and fire-balls. The citizens fought hard for each quarter of the city, but the troops of Tahir at last overcame their resistance. Thus quarter after quarter of the capital was first levelled to the ground and then captured. So when at last the Imperial City fell into Tahir's hand, it was in utter ruins from one end to the other. Thereupon, Amin's supporters began to desert him to the enemy, leaving him at last surrounded by his slave-girls, jesters, his mother, Empress Zubayda and a few loyal soldiers. Even his treasure, given lavishly in bribes, failed to rally the citizens around him. The city was finally stormed and captured in September, 813. In his extremity, Amin fled to the Inner Citadel built by Mansur on the western bank of the river, accompanied by his mother and his harim of damsels and eunuchs.

Death of Amin. The struggle could not now be prolonged any longer. Though the inner Citadel was stoutly defended by the engines of war, Amin had only a handful of loyal men to fight for

him. However, he hated to surrender himself to Tahir. He offered to surrender himself to Harthama. Tahir and his men came to know of this plan. When the Caliph descended from the Citadel into a boat in the river, where Harthama was waiting to receive him, Tahir's soldiers attacked him. Amin escaped by swimming to the other side and took refuge in a house. In the morning, Tahir's Khurasani soldiers found out his whereabouts and put him to death. Thus died Amin, a Caliph of whom the Arab historian, Ibn al-Athir says, "We find of him no good thing to say." He reigned for four years and eight months and was twenty-eight years of age at the time of his death.

Significance of Amin's death in Medieval Islamic History : The defeat and death of Amin signifies a turning-point in the history of the Arabs. They now finally lost the pride of place which they had occupied in the history of Islam since the great conquests of Umar I. They actually retreated into their desert fastness. Only Arabian tongue and religion survived in the Abbaside Caliphate. In other words, Arabism or Arab racial dominance was now dead or dying, while Islamism remained supreme but under the guidance and ascendancy of Persianism or Persian Shu'ubiyah sentiments and thought. This change in the political, social, religious and intellectual life of the Abbaside Caliphate was abundantly illustrated by the reign's of Amin's brother, al-Mamun and his successors.

AL-MAMUN : 813-33/198-218 A. H.

Mamun's reign. As we have said above, Mamun had already proclaimed himself Ameer-ul-Momineen in Khurasan during Amin's reign. His victory over his brother made him the Caliph of the whole caliphate now significantly divided into the Persian half in the East and the Arab half in the west. If Mamun had shifted his court from Merv to Baghdad immediately after his victory over Amin, this division of the Empire into Persian and Arab halves would not have created any trouble in his reign. But Mamun allowed himself to be persuaded by his clever and ambitious Wazir, Fazl bin Sahl, to remain at Merv, while leaving his Arab provinces to be administered by the nominees of the Wazir, who were mostly Persians. This fact not only engendered resentment in Baghdad and in the Arab provinces, but also divided Mamun's reign into two parts, *viz.* the first six years when he was at Merv. and the remaining fourteen years when he shifted his court to Baghdad.

Mamun at Merv : 813-19. Two things induced Mamun to stay on at Merv : his tractable nature which enabled his clever Wazir to persuade him to stay in Merv, and his Persian proclivities which made him to prefer the Persian East to the Arabian West.

Indeed, Mamun left the government of the Caliphate under the absolute and uncontrolled direction of Fazl bin Sahl, his Wazir, while he devoted himself to philosophical discussions with the divines and scholars who formed his court. Fazl's influence strengthened the Persian proclivities of the Caliph and also made him to adopt the cause of the Shia. These inclinations of the Caliph produced sharp reactions in Baghdad and the west. But of these his crafty Wazir kept him in the dark for a long time.

Disorders in the west. The death of Amin and the banishment of his mother, Zubayda, to Mosul, roused the populace of Baghdad to revolt against Tahir, his murderer, for Amin was still popular with them. Order was, however, soon restored by the liberal distribution of treasure among the Baghdadians. But trouble broke out afresh when Mamun, on the advice of his Wazir, appointed Hasan bin Sahl, a brother of the Wazir, as the Viceroy of Iraq in place of Tahir. Revolts broke out in Iraq, Mesopotamia and Syria, for the people hated to be ruled by the Persians. First Nasr bin Shabath revolted in 813 in support of the late Caliph, Amin, in Mesopotamia and Aleppo. His revolt continued for five years, for Tahir who was sent against him fought only half-heartedly, He remained inactive at ar-Raqqa. Next year, in 814, a more serious revolt broke out at Kufa. It was headed by a Bedouin adventurer, named Abu'l Saraya who supported the cause of an Alide, named Ibn Taba-Taba, of Banu Hasan. The fickle Kufans, ever ready to rise in favour of the House of Ali and incensed with the Persian proclivities of Mamun, rose to a man to welcome the Alide pretender. Soon the whole of Lower Iraq, including Basra, joined hands with the rebels. Abu'l Saraya quietly disposed of Ibn Taba-Taba and placed a boyish Alide at the head of his revolt. The forces sent by Hasan bin Sahl against the rebels were defeated. For two years they remained the masters of Lower Iraq. But when they threatened to advance on Baghdad itself, the frightened viceroy persuded the veteran soldier, Harthama, to march against them. Harthama defeated the rebels, captured Kufa, killed Abu'l Saraya and arrested the Alide pretender who was sent to Merv where he was pardoned by Mamun. But Alide troubles continued in Basra and in Hijaz for some time.

Death of Harthama : 815 A. D. After suppressing the revolt in Iraq, Harthama returned to Nahrawan, his headquarters, without visiting the Viceroy at Baghdad, for he also hated him. There he received the orders of the Caliph, to go to Arabia and Syria as governor. But the old warrior decided to proceed to Merv to acquaint the Caliph of the true state of affairs in the West. H intended to report against the misgovernment of the Wazir and brother in Baghdad, and to advise the Caliph to return to Baghda he wanted to save the Caliphate. When Harthama reached M

he entered the city with bands playing martial tunes so as to attract the Caliph's attention. The crafty Wazir, however, divined his purpose and piosoned the ears of the Caliph against him. So, when brought before him, the Caliph angrily rebuked him for disobeying his orders. Before Harthama could utter a word, Fazl's men, as pre-arranged, fell upon him and fiercely belaboured him. He was carried away seriously wounded, and died a few days later. Thus died the man who had served the Abbasides so long and so faithfully from one end of their Caliphate to the other.

Rising at Baghdad : 815-16. Harthama was very popular with the troops in Baghdad. When they heard of his death, they at once revolted against Hasan bin Sahl and the Wazir, whom they called "a Magian, son of a Magian". The populace of Baghdad also joined the rising. The Viceroy was forced to flee to Wasit, while the people chose Mansur bin Mahdi as the governor of Baghdad. He rejected the offer to become a caliph. Disorders in Baghdad continued which forced the more prosperous citizens to come to terms with Hasan who then returned to the capital.

Nomination of Ali ar-Raza as successor : 816 A. D. Hardly had peace been restored in Baghdad when it was again thrown into a violent disorder by another pro-Shia act of the Caliph. It was the nomination of the eighth Shia Imam, Ali bin Musa ar-Raza as his heir-apparent. As we have said above, the Abbasides had come to power on the pretext of restoring the legitimate rights of the Ahl al Bayt to the Headship of Islam. Mamun had since long a plan of his own to right this wrong. It was perhaps put into his mind by his clever Wazir as the best solution for putting to an end the Abide revolts in the West. He, therefore, decided to nominate an Alide as his successor and thus to hand over the sovereignty of Islam to the Ahl al-Bayt. A search was made among them in order to discover the most deserving, *i.e., ar-rada* to be proclaimed as the next caliph. At last, in 817, Ali the son of Mus al-Kazim, the eighth Imam of the Shia, was nominated as the successor of Mamun. Thus the Caliph sought to reconcile the Alides to the Abbasides. This plan, however, came too late. Tried earlier, it might have been successful. But now it provoked a violent opposition of the powerful Abbaside clan, now thirty-three thousand strong. They were not willing to renounce their rights in favour of the Alides. It also aroused the anti-Persian feelings of the people of Baghdad and of the Western provinces who hated to be ruled by the Persianised Shias. But the Caliph was skilfully kept in the dark about these reactions by his Wazir, Fazl bin Sahl. He persuaded the Caliph to change even the Abbaside black colour for the Alide green.

Revolt in Baghdad. Hasan bin Sahl, the Viceroy, attempted to enforce the royal decrees regarding the nomination of Ali ar-Raza

and the change of the national dress to green in the capital. It led to an immediate revolt. The people of Baghdad now decided to depose Mamun altogether and elect his uncle, Ibrahim bin Mahdi, as caliph. Hasan was again forced to flee to Wasit. However, Ibrahim proved himself to be a weak ruler and held his position with difficulty for about two years. In the meanwhile, all the western provinces were practically in revolt against Mamun. But, thanks to his Wazir, the Caliph was absolutely ignorant of all these events in the West.

Mamun's eyes opened by Imam Ali ar-Raza : 817 A. D. So complete was Fazl's mastery over the Caliph and so great was his fear that none dared to inform the Caliph about the critical situation in the western half of his Caliphate. At last, the good Imam Raza resolved to acquaint him with the true state of affairs. He told the Caliph that the Wazir was hiding facts from him, that his Shia persuasions and Persian proclivities were hated by the people of the West, that the Wazir and his brother had brought the Caliphate to the verge of disaster and that they had virtually exiled Tahir to ar-Raqqa, who alone could save the Empire. Mamun was thunder-struck by this disclosure. It was confirmed by several other men in his court, whom the Caliph promised to protect against the Wazir's vindictiveness. They also told him that Harthama's death two years before was engineered by the Wazir to hide facts from him, for the old warrior had come to reveal the truth to him. They further told him that the people of Baghdad, who considered him either half-witted or bewitched by the Persians, had deposed him and elected Ibrahim bin Mahdi in his place as a new caliph.

Journey to Baghdad : Feb., 817-Aug., 819. Mamun was staggered by these revelationts and ordered to move his court from Merv to Baghdad. But he travelled leisurely to the west, staying for a long time in various cities on the way in order to give ample time to the citizens of Baghdad to change their hostility and turn their allegiance towards him. Two events aided in this change of loyalty. When at Sarrakhs, in March 818, the Wazir, Fazl bin Sahl, was found dead in his bath. His murderers, who professed to have murdered him on the instructions of the Caliph, were ordered to be beheaded by Mamun, who sent a letter of condolence to his brother, Hasan bin Sahl, the Viceroy. To show his attachment further, Mamun betrothed himself to the daughter of Hasan bin Sahl, named Buran. A few months later, in August, 818, when the Caliph reached Tus, Imam Ali ar-Raza died of eating a surfeit of grapes. Though Mamun was suspected of poisoning the grapes, he showed much grief over Imam's death and buried him in the tomb of his father, Harun. The death of Ali ar-Raza, however, removed the real obstacle to the acceptance of Mamun's caliphate by the people of Baghdad. Many of them began quietly to desert Ibrahim bin

Mahdi, the rival caliph, whose rule was harsh and inept. At last, when Mamun reached Nahrawan, many leading citizens of the capital came out to wait upon him, while his soldiers took possession of the city. Ibrahim fled and hid himself. So Mamun entered Baghdad in August, 819, with his courtiers and nobles, including Tahir who had come from ar-Raqqa. The Caliph graciously accepted the popular request to change the national dress again to the Abbaside black from the Alide green. He also pardoned all those who had helped Ibrahim's revolt, "The whole attitude of al-Mamun" writes Muir, "was, on this occasion, generous and forgiving". Even Fazl bin Rabii, the Wazir of Amin, who had hid since his death, was brought before the Caliph and pardoned. A few years later, the rival caliph, Ibrahim bin Mahdi, was arrested by Mamun's men disguised in woman's clothing. He too was pardoned by the Caliph.

Mamun in Baghdad : 819-33. Now began the second stage in Mamun's caliphate. The Caliph did not cast away all his former associates, nor his former pro-Persian and pro-Shi'ite inclinations. Hasan bin Sahl was still in royal favour. The tragic death of his brother caused him to go mad for some time. When he recovered, Mamun made him his Wazir.

Mamun's marriage with feudal extravagance. After a few years, in 826 A. D., the Caliph married Buran, the daughter of Hasan. The nuptials were celebrated on a magnificently extravagant scale. The Caliph and his Court assembled for the occasion in Wasit, at Fam us-Sihl which had become the country residence of Hasan bin Sahl, the father of the bride. Zubayda, the step-mother of Mamun, was also invited to participiate in the ceremonies of the marriage. Hasan, to mark his gratitude to the Caliph spent fabulous sums in presents to the courtiers and chiefs of the Caliphate in a peculiarly feudal style. He showered balls of musk on the gathering, in each of which was the name of an estate, a slave-girl, a steed or some such gift. He who cought the ball got the prize named in it. At the same time, coins of gold and silver were showered on the commonalty assembled outside. To meet this feudal expenditure, Mamun allotted one year's revenue of Ahwaz and Fars to his father-in-law. By her beauty and wit, her charity and virtues, Buran acquired great influence over her royal husband in the last years of his life. She survived Mamun by fifty years. She thus saw the Caliphate both at the pinnacle of its prosperity and power and in the days of its decline and disintegration.

Pacification of the West. Mamun's entry into Baghdad heralded an era of peace in the troubled provinces of the West. Nasr bin Shabath's rebellion in North Syria and Mesopotamia was soon suppressed by Abdullah, the son of Tahir bin Hasan. The Alide

pretenders in Iraq and Arabia also vanished without any resistance. A revolt in Egypt was suppressed by Abdullah bin Tahir.

Conquest of Crete and Sicily. The Umayyad rulers of Spain drove out a large party of Arab rebels from their country. The rebels settled in Egypt but were a source of trouble for its governor. When asked to leave Egypt, they offered to settle in Crete if the Abbasides would help them in materials of war. With this aid, they conquered Crete and settled there. At the same time, the Aghlabid rulers of Qayrowan conquered Sicily. They even landed in South Italy and advanced towards Rome. But these conquests were not the work of the Abbasides.

Rebellion of Babek : 816 A. D. Early in Mamun's reign, a Persian arch-heretic, named Babek Khurammi, spread his revolt in the northern regions of Persia, around the Caspian Sea, called Mazandran. He gathered a large following. The territory of Mazandran was mountainous and inaccessible, which enabled Babek to resist successfully several armies sent by the Caliph. He remained a source of trouble upto the reign of Mamun's successor, Motasim.

Tahir appointed as the Viceroy of the East: 820. On his entry into Baghdad, Mamun made Tahir the governor of the Caliphal capital. But Tahir felt uneasy to live so close to the Caliph who had developed an aversion towards him. Being aware of it, he persuaded the Wazir to propose him for the viceroyalty of the East, where a strong hand was then needed. The proposal was accepted by the Caliph. Tahir went to Merv to assume the administration of the eastern provinces. His appointment was not a wise one, for Tahir soon set himself up as an independent ruler. It is said that Mamun suspected him of it. He sent along with him a confidential slave with instructions to poison the viceroy as soon as he showed signs of insubordination. Two years after his appointment, in 822, one day Tahir failed to mention the name of the Caliph in his Friday Khutba. The postmaster of the province, who acted as a governmental spy, reported this matter at once to the Caliph at Baghdad. But that very day, the faithful slave poisoned Tahir to death, and the second messenger conveyed the news of Tahir's death to Baghdad. However, so powerful had the family become that Mamun was forced to allow the governorship to remain in the hands of Tahir's second son, Talha. Thus the Tahirids became the hereditary rulers of Khurasan and became virtually independent of the Central Government at Baghdad. Thus the first signs of the disintegration of the Abbaside Empire manifested themselves during the reign of Mamun.

War with the Byzantine : 830-33. Since the death of Harun, there had been an uneasy peace between the Byzantine Empire and the Caliphate. It was due to the internal quarrels of the rulers of Constantinople. In 830, hostilities were renewed between the Muslims and the Christians. One important reason was the alliance between the Persian heretic, Babek and the Greeks. The Byzantines invaded Muslim territories in Asia Minor, while Babek pressed upon them in Azerbaijan or northern Persia. Mamun took a serious view of the Byzantine invasion and personally assumed command of the Muslim armies fighting against the Christians. In a series of successful campaigns, he so completely crushed the Byzantines that they were forced to sue for peace. He captured several border fortresses which compelled the Emperor Theophilus to sue for peace. But hostilities were ever renewed again and again, which compelled the Caliph to strengthen the frontier defences in Asia Minor. Like his father, Mamun constructed a strong fort at Tayna which was to garrison a large military force. The plan was laid by the Caliph himself, and its construction supervised by his son, Al-Abbas.

Death of Mamun : August 833. While busy fighting the Greeks, Mamun had made Tarsus his headquarters. One day, while he was resting near Tarsus, he bathed in a chilly mountain stream, from which he caught fever and died after a brief illness. Before his death, he nominated his younger, Abu Ishaq Muhammad al-Mutasim, who was with him at Tarsus, as his successor.

Character of Mamun. Mamun, writes Muir, "cannot be acquitted of acts of capricious violence, some of which are just as cruel as those which stain the memory of his predecessors." But Muir quotes the equivocal and unproven cases of the deaths of Fazl bin Sahl, Imam Ali Raza and Tahir and the persecution of the Ulema to support his charges of cruelty. Yet he himself admits, that "considering the length of his reign and his magnanimous attitude towards the rebels of Baghdad, the balance must incline to the verdict of leniency and moderation in a Caliphate which, taken as a whole, is one of the most brilliant in the history of Islam." Ameer Ali, quoting the opinion of an Arab historian, writes ; Mamun "was the most distinguished of the House of Abbas, for his prudence, his determination, his clemency and judgment, his sagacity and awe-inspiring aspect, his intrepidity, majesty, and liberality. He had many eminent qualities and a long series of memorable actions are recorded of him. Of the House of Abbas none wiser than he ever ruled the Caliphate." In short, Mamun was a great ruler, a good administrator and a brave soldier.

The Age of Mamun : A Review of his policy and achievements.

The reign of Mamun was the great age of Islamic culture and science. It was the age when the Persian ascendancy reached at its zenith. It ushered in "the palmy days of literature and philosophy." Under the influence of his mother, his tutor, Jafar Barmaki, his Wazir, Fazl bin Sahl and his wife, Buran bint Hasan bin Sahl, who were all Persians, Mamun acquired strong Persian prejudices and Shia proclivities. These influences also explain his intellectual and philosophic interests.

Nature of Persian Ascendancy. Mamun's reign witnessed the Persian influence at its highest. It implied three things : intellectual rationalism, religious heterodoxy, and political absolutism. These features of Persian ascendancy were visible from the very outset of the Abbaside rule, but they reached at their highest during Mamun's reign, due to the reasons already mentioned. Each one of these features influeuced his policy and determined his activities and achievements.

The Age of Rationalism. The reigns of Mamun and of his two immediate successors, Motasim and Wathiq, have been aptly designated as the age of Islamic Rationalism. The Rationalists were ascendant in all walks of life, in mosques, in schools, and in the Caliph's court. Ameer Ali writes, "As professors, preachers, scientists, physicians, viziers or provincial governors, they helped in the growth and development of the Saracenic nation." We shall mention here only two examples of the Rationalist ascendancy : the court life under Mamun and his advocacy of Mutazilite doctrines.

Mamun's Court. Unlike his brother, Amin, Mamun had no liking for hedonistic indulgences and senseless revelries. On the contrary, the Caliph was deeply interested in intellectual matters and philosophic discussions. His court, like that of Harun, was a galaxy of eminent men and great minds. It was crowded with men of science and literature, with poets, philosophers, savants, doctors of divinity and physicians, who came from all parts of the civilised world and from diverse races and religions. To his court also came historians, philologists, grammarians and traditionalists who had gathered in Baghdad. The Caliph, who was famous for his librality, lavishly patronised all these men of learning, religion and arts irrespective of their race or religion. What is more remarkable, he accorded them fullest and freest opportunity for discussion and debate in his court and of the propagation of their beliefs. Tuesdays were reserved for literary, philosophical and scientific dis cussions, which were presided over by the Caliph himself. They began from the morning and lasted till night. The learned gathering was entertained with lunch, breakfast and dinner by the Caliph on a royal scale. The theologians and divines of all schools,

Mustlms and Christians, Magians and Jews, Orthodox Muslims and the free-thinking Mutazilites, freely discussed in the Caliph's presence all matters of religion and philosophy, such as the nature of Godhead, relations between man and God, the attributes and essence of Deity, Freedom of Will, Predestination and above all, the "created" or "uncereated" nature of the Quran. These discussions had a deep influence on the mind and policy of the Caliph. They strengthened his Shia-ite inclinations and finally made him to adopt the liberal and free-thinking doctrines of the Mutazila.

Men of learning and science. As we have said above, men of science and learning, literature and theology flourished in the age of Mamun and gathered in large numbers at his court. Among them the most famous were the great collector of Ahadith. Bukhari, the historian al-Waqidi, the jurists of the Fiqh, Shaafi and Ibn Hanbal, the Christian Qusta bin Luqa, the biographer of the Prophet named Ibn Hisham, Ibn Qutayba a historian of the first rank and a Persian, and others.

Translations. The work of translating foreign books into Arabic had commenced in the days of Mansur, but it became well-organised and universal under Mamun, owing to his liberal, scientific and tolerant attitude towards all religions and philosophies. He welcomed to his court Jews and Christians for their knowledge of Greek and Syriac, Zoroastrians for their knowledge of the old Persian and Hindus for their knowledge of Sanskrit. The rationalistic tendencies of the Caliph, and his espousal of the Mu'tazilite cause, which maintained that religious principles should agree with the judgments of reason, led him to seek justification for his position in the philosophical works of the Greeks. Hence began a search for the writings and manuscripts of the Greek philosophers, historians and geometricians. The Christian monasteries in Syria, Palestine and Egypt were ransacked for them, while requests were made to the Byzantin emperor and to the monasteries in Asia Minor to supply the same. These books of Greek philosophy and learning were translated with great labour and erudition into Arabic by such men as Qusta bin Luqa, Hunayn bin Ishaq, his nephew Hubaish bin Hasan, his son, Ishaq and others. The books in ancient Persian were translated by Yahya bin Harun, and those in Sanskrit by Duban the Brahmin.

Foundation of Bayt-al-Hikmah. One of the most remarkable achievements of Mamun was the foundation of the Bayt-al-Hikmah, the House of Learning. In pursuance of his policy of encouraging philosophic discussions and translations of the books of foreign learning Mamun established the Bayt al Hikmah in 830 in Baghdad. It was, so to say, a combination of library, academy and translation bureau which proved to be as a great an

educational achievement as the Alexandrian Museum, founded in the first half of the third century B. C. Its translation department was placed by the Caliph under the supervision of the Greek-knowing Christian scholar, Hunayn bin Ishaq. These translations soon encouraged original research and production. Special departments under qualified scholars were set up to promote the study and authorship of various branches of science and learning. Besides the Caliph, many private citizens also undertook the great task of translation, study and production. Among them the most famous were the three scholarly sons of Musa bin Shakir who were carrying on independent research work into various Greek-speaking lands in quest of manuscripts.

Other scientific achievements. The age of Mamun saw progress in several other fields of science and knowledge. The first observatory in the history of Islam was established by Mamun at Shammassia on the plain of Tadmor. It furnished vaiuable data for the successful study of astronomy and geometry, such as regards the equinoxes, the eclipses, the apparitions of the comets, etc. The size of the earth was determined almost to the same diamensions as found by the present-day science. This was, as Ameer Ali says, at a time when Christian Europe stoutly asserted that the earth was flat. Abu'l Hassan invented a telescope, which was "a tube" to the ends of which lenses were attached. Such 'tubes' were afterwards successfully used in the observatories at Cairo and Maragha.

Thus the twenty years of Mamun's reign as Ameer Ali says "have left enduring monument to the intellectual development of the Moslem's in all directions of thought." Mamun's reign has been aptly described as the most glorious epoch in Saracenic history, and the Augustan Age of Islam". "We see for the first time", writes Oelfner, "perhaps in the history of the world, a religious and despotic government allied to philosophy, preparing and partaking in its triumphs."

Mamun's religious heterodoxy. One of the most remarkable features of Mamun's mind and policy was his religious heterodoxy. It was a result of his liberalism, his rationalism in matters of philosophy and religion, his Persian proclivities and Shi'ite predilections. The Tuesday debates in his court and his Persian viziers and associates also strengthened this tendency. As a result of these influences and inclinations, the Caliph finally adopted the Mutazila doctrines and tenets in 828, nealy four years before his death. This was a departure from the religious policy and attitudes of his Abbaside predecessors who were strict in the observance of Orthodox beliefs. It led to a struggle between the two tendencies in Islam, that is, between the "Sunni" orthodoxy and

the "Shia" heterodoxy as represented by the free-thinking, rationalistic teachings of the Mutazilites. The Caliph, however, did not content himself with mere espousal of the Mutazila doctrines but decided to spread them actively in his Caliphate.

Enforcement of the Mutazila views. Two years before his death, in 831, when busy fighting the Greeks, Mamun sent an order to his governor of Baghdad to summon the judges and doctors of Islamic theology and test their beliefs on the principles of Mutazila regarding the nature of Godhead, the "createdness" of the Quran, etc., and to punish those who refused to accept the Mutazilite interpretations. It is said that most of those questioned accepted them, but twenty of them, headed by Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, refused to do so. They were taken in chains to the Caliph's camp, and were threatened with dire consequences if they failed to conform to the Caliphal heterodox principles. They stood firm. The Caliph died soon after, but advised his successor, Motasim, to persecute them for their non-conformity.

Political System of Mamun. The liberal and tolerant spirit of Mamun also manifested itself in the political system he established. He was not such an arbitrary despot as his father, Harun In this respect, his Persianism did not lead him to a monarchical and arbitrary absolutism. On the contrary, he endeavoured to justify his rule by ensuring the security of Islam and the consent of the Muslims. As he told a Khariji zealot, he would resign the government if the people would agree upon any man whom they approved of more than him.

A Council of State. Mamun lessened the rigours of autocracy by instituting a Council of State to advise the Caliph. It was composed of representatives from all the communities under his rule, including Muslims, Magians, Jews, Christians and others.

Freedom of religion. Finally, Mamun granted freedom of worship and religion to all communities. It is said that 11,000 Christian churches and a great many Jewish synagogues and temples of other religious communities existed in the length and breadth of his Empire.

CHAPTER 20

AL-MUTASIM AND AL-WATHIQ

AL-MUTASIM B'ILLAH : 833-42/218-27

Accession of Mutasim. Shortly before his death, Mamun nominated his younger brother, Abu Ishaq Muhammad, as his successor. It is difficult to know why he did not nominate his soldierly son, Abbas, who was popular with the army. The reason might be his Persianism, for Abbas was supported by the Arab elememts in his army, while Mamun expected that his more matured brother would continue his Persianising policy. After Mamun's death, the army was ready to support Abbas against his uncle, but he nipped this move in the bud by himself taking the oath of allegiance at his uncle's hand in accordance with his father's will. Thus Abu Ishaq Muhammad was proclaimed Caliph at Tarsus. He assumed the title of al-Mutasim b'Illah, which we have abbreviated here as Mutasim. (Henceforth it became a custom among the Abbaside Caliphs to be entitled with the affix of "b'Illah", which we shall drop from their titles for the sake of euphony.)

Policy and character of Mutasim. Mutasim had all the qualities of Mamun but without his brilliance. Indeed, he was more of a soldier than a scholar, as Mamun was. He possessed his brother's pro-Persian, pro-Shia and pro-Mutazilite predilections. In his advocacy of the Mutazilite doctrines he was more militant than Mamun. He also relied more on the Turks and employed Turkish and Berber slaves in his army as soldiers and commanders. Mutasim was a kind-hearted, generous and mild ruler.

Beginning of the Turkish Ascendency. Slavery existed in Islam from the very beginning. But it was then merely a social and economic affair. Under the Abbasides it became more extensive. Increasing number of slaves were employed by them as soldiers and functionaries. Mutasim was the first Abbaside Caliph who created regular military units of the slaves and appointed them to positions of command. There were slaves of various races and nationalities, but two of them, the Turks of Transoxiana and the Berbers of North Africa, were specially recruited in the armies of the Caliphs. Among them, the Turkish slaves, called Mamluks, acquired greater influence and power. It was partly due to their great numbers, but mainly due to the reason that they were Persianised. They had come through Transoxiana, Khurasan and

Persian Northern Provinces, where Persian religion, culture and tongue were predominant. At first these slave-soldiers were commanded by free Arab or Perisan officers. But Mutasim, who had a standing slave army of two lakh fifty thousand soldiers, appointed or promoted Turkish slaves to positions of command. Among them were Afshin, Ashnas, Itakh and others. Thus the Arab and the Persian commanders were cast into the background, while the Turkish commanders and soldiers acquired increasing influence and power over the Caliph. This tendency was further strengthened by the short-sighted decision of the Caliph to shift his capital from Baghdad to Samarra.

Transfer of Capital to Samarra. The Turkish slave-army was, indeed, an unruly mob. When they passed through the narrow streets of Baghdad, they galloped their horses, injurying and even killing men, women and children. This led to frequent quarrels between the Turkish soldiers and the citizens of Baghdad. The people complained to the Caliph against the unruly behaviour of the Turks, but the Caliph did not pay heed to these complaints. In 836, fearing a riot in the city, the Caliph ordered his court and his Turkish soldiery to move to a place called Samarra, nearly ninety kilometres to the north-west of Baghdad on the Tigris. Soon there were built palaces for the Caliph, mansions for his Turkish commanders, barracks for his Turkish army and bodyguard, and stables for a hundred and sixty thousand horses. It became a beautiful city; hence it came to be called as "Surra-man-ar-rāa", which means "he was pleased who saw it." For about sixty years, from 836 to 894, Samarra remained the capital of the Caliphate during the reigns of seven Caliphs. But it proved to be their prison rather than their capital. Removed from the counter-balancing influence of the citizens of Baghdad, the Caliphs fell more and more under the influence and domination of their Turkish commanders. Their courts became centres of Turkish intrigues and conspiracies. The Caliphs became helpless prisoners in the hands of the Turks, who placed or removed them from the throne as they liked. Thus was established the Turkish ascendancy over the successors of Mutasim due to his elevation of the Turks to high ranks and the transfer of his capital.

The Zott Rebellion. In the marshes of the Lower Iraq dwelt a strange Indian tribe, whom the Arabs called the Zott, probably an Arabic form of the word "Jat". Their origin is obscure. They served in the Muslim armies. In 834, they took to highway robbery, plundering the boats and ships going to or coming from Baghdad. The Caliph sent an army against them, commanded by an Arab chief Ojaif. They were defeated and captured. Nearly seventeen thousand Zotts were settled by the Caliph's orders on the borders of Asia Minor. But in the wars with the Greeks, many of them, were captured by them and sold as slaves in Europe, where they

became gypsies in later times.

Persian Heretics. As we have mentioned above, the northern provinces of Persia again became the scene of the revolts of the Persian heretics in the days of Mamun. They were led by the heresiarch Babek.

Babek's rebellion: his faith and followers. The origin of Babek is unknown. According to one tradition, he was the son of a poor Persian peasant woman of Azerbaijan. At first he was a servant of Jawidan, the mountain chief of the Khurrami or Mazdaki sect. After Jawidan's death, Babek married his wife and became the leader of his Khurrami followers. According to another tradition, Babek was the grandson of Fatima, the daughter of Abu Muslim. He first led his followers into revolt in 816 A. D., during the early part of Mamun's reign, and for the next twenty years (816-37), he held large territories in Azerbaijan, Armenia and northern regions of Persia. He was, indeed, the first heretic leader who held such large territories for so long a time. It indicates that he was a man of remarkable military and political leadership. Vast multitudes in northern Persia adopted his faith and flocked under his standard. Like all other Persian heretics, Babek believed himself to be a god. He believed in metempsychosis and asserted that his master Jawidan's spirit had passed into him. Moreover, like all other Mazdaki or Khurrami sects, he also did not practise the rules of morality taught by Islam, or Christianity. Instead, he and his followers practised a much more free morality and social relations, hence called "Khurrami" i.e., pleasure-seekers. But Babek and his followers fought against the Muslims far more ferociously than the earlier heretics. An Arab writer said that Babek "introduced into the Khurrami sects murder, rapine, wars and cruel punishments, hitherto unknown to them." His followers were derived from the peasant communities which dwelt in the mountainous regions of northern Persia. They joined his forces for he preached and practised the break-up of large feudal estates and distributed them among the peasants. Indeed, many Persian "dihqans" or landlords also joined him for their lands had been seized by the old Arab or new Persian or Turkish nobility of the Abbasides. They were thus reduced to the level of petty landlords and peasants. Thus the very word "dihqan" changed its meanings, and now came to mean a peasant. These were the social changes in the outlying provinces of Persia, which enabled the Persian heresiarchs since Abu Muslim's days to collect such large followings and to revolt against the Abbasides. Among them, Babek was the most successful, for reasons of the extent, duration, and cohesion of his leadership and power.

Babek's defeat and death. For twenty years, Babek resisted

successfully the armies which Mamun and Mutasim sent against him. His power was based on a chain of fortresses in the mountains of North Persia. In course of time, Babek extended his sway over Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Kurdish lands reaching as far south as Hamadan. In the west, he joined hands with the Byzantines, who allied with him in their war against the Muslims. He cut off the northern trade route and thus threatened the commercial prosperity of the Abbaside Caliphate. At last, in 837 A.D., Mutasim despatched an army under his Turkish commander, Afshin, against him. Afshin captured Babek's mountainous strongholds one by one and finally captured him along with his brother, Abdullah, in his well-known strong-hold, called Al-Badhdh. He was brought to Samarra and put to death, after he was paraded through the streets. His head was sent around the cities in Khurasan, while his body was impaled in Samarra. His brother met the same fate in Baghdad. With the death of Babek came to an end the Persian heresies. The revolts of the Persian heresiarchs really meant the last attempt of the dying religion and culture of Ancient Persia, struggling hard against the culture and civilisation of the new Persia of Islam.

War with the Greeks. Soon after his accession, Mutasim made peace with the Greeks. He even withdrew his forces from the Greek borders and deserted the new barrack-city of Tyana which Mamun was constructing near Tarsus. But peace with the Greek did not last long. Two reasons caused the renewal of the fighting between the Greeks and the Muslims. The first was the alliance between the Greeks and Babek. The second reason, which became the immediate cause, was the destruction of Zibatra, the birthplace of Mutasim, by the Greek Emperor Theophilus. The Greeks massacred Musilm population in this place with great barbarity. The news of these barbarities enraged the Caliph who at once marched against the Greeks in March, 838. He inflicted a defeat upon Emperor Theophilus at Ancyra and then advanced upon Amorium, the birthplace of the Emperor. After a siege of fifty days Amorium fell into the Muslim hands and was burnt and razed to the ground in revenge for Zibatra. Mutasim had a plan to march on Constantinople. But he was prevented from doing so by a plot in his army which was revealed at this time.

Arab Plot against the Caliph. The favours which the Caliph lavished upon his Turkish commanders and their insolent behaviour created strong feelings of jealousy and resentment among the Arab commanders of the Caliph. Led by Ojaif, the victor of the Zott rebellion, they entered into a conspiracy with Abbas, the son of Mamun, to murder the Caliph and proclaim Abbas as the Caliph. This plot was hatched during the siege of Amorium. But it was prematurely revealed to the Caliph. He

immediately arrested the leaders of the plot, including his nephew Abbas, who were all put to death. But the revelation of the conspiracy so upset the Caliph that he abandoned his plan to invade Constantinople and hurriedly returned with the Turks to Samarra. This event further increased the influence and power of the Turks and also the dependence of the Caliph upon them. The Turkish slave-soldiers had neither love nor loyalty for the Caliph. On the other hand, their endless intrigues, envy, hatred, greed and lust for power made Samarra and the Caliph's court a hotbed of intrigues, murders and violence.

Maziar's revolt in Khurasan. Maziar was the Magian ruler of Tabaristan and a tributary of the Caliph. He revolted in 838. The Caliph ordered Abdullah bin Tahir, now the semi-independent governor of Khurasan, to march against him. Afshin, the Turkish commander, victor of Babek, and a favourite of the Caliph, secretly encouraged Maziar to persist in his revolt in the hope that his resistance against Abdullah would compel Mutasim to send Afshin to Khurasan as its governor in place of its Tahiride ruler. But Abdullah bin Tahir crushed Maziar's revolt, captured him and sent him to the Caliph. Confronted with Afshin, Maziar showed the Caliph the letters which Afshin had written him abetting him to revolt, and thus revealed his treachery. Maziar was, however, executed, but Afshin was brought before a court for a trial. Strange though it may seem, Afshin was not tried for his treachery and treason but for his apostasy because he was at heart a Magian though outwardly he professed Islam. Idols, books and other proofs of his Magian faith were discovered from his house and he was executed as an apostate. His body was impaled at the same place where the dried up corpse of Babek dangled.

Death of Mutasim : January, 842. Shortly after Afshin's execution, Mutasim also died.

An Estimate of Mutasim's caliphate. The reign of Mutasim (as well as of his son Wathiq) was a continuation of the reign of Mamun. He continued the same policies and principles which Mamun had laid down, though with a difference of emphasis. Firstly, Mutasim was a more militant Mutazilite than Mamun. Soon after his accession, he began a rigorous persecution of the Orthodox Ulema, who refused to conform to the Mutazilite interpretations of Islam, especially that the Quran was "created" and therefore not eternal. Imam Ibn Hambal and other Orthodox Ulema were again arrested and questioned. As they remained firm in their refusal to accept Mutazilite views, they were lashed by the orders of the Caliph and thrown

into a prison. The persecutions of the Orthodox Ulema caused great alarm and resentment in Baghdad. There was a threat of riot and revolt, which became one of the causes of Mutasim's decision to shift his capital to Samarra. His chief Qazi and advisor was Ahmad bin Abu Daud, a leader of the Mutazilites. Secondly, Mutasim favoured the Turks far more than Mamun ever did. Samarra, his new capital, was an exclusively Turkish city, filled with the Turkish slave-soldiers and commanders. The Arabs and the Persians were thrown into the background. There was, however, one great difference between the Turks and the Persians. If the Persians had one weakness—the worship of a king, whether Magian or Muslim, the Turks had another weakness—they worshipped the sword or political power, and the longer the sword, the greater their worship. In their lust for power and all that power brings, such as wealth and riches, the Turkish soldiers and commanders indulged in endless intrigues, murders and violence. Their greed, violence, perfidy, extortions, blood-shed, jealousies and treacheries were unlimited. Mutasim was strong enough to keep them in check. But this was not true of his weak successors, who became helpless puppets in the Turkish hands to be placed or deposed from the throne as they liked. And so the Abbaside Caliphate rapidly sank to political senility and impotence, a mere shadow of its great past. As Gibbon remarks, "With Motassem, the eighth of the Abbasids, the glory of his family and nation expired." Thirdly, like his great predecessors, Mansur, Harun and Mamun, Mutasim was deeply interested in the development of agriculture and natural reasources of his caliphate. The development of feudal economy, which was arrested by the decline and fall of the Umayyads, began anew under Mansur and his successors. They created large feudal estates and farms all over Iraq, around Baghdad, Basra, Wasit and other great centres in Iraq, Persia and elsewhere. Under Mutasim, these lands were now increasingly allotted to his Turkish commanders and favourites.

AL-WATHIQ. 842-847/227-32. A. H.

Wathiq's accession and character. Mutasim was succeeded by his son, Abu Jafar Harun, with the title of *Al-Wathiq b'Illah*, briefly Wathiq. Like his father and grandfather, Wathiq continued the pro-Persian, pro-Mutazilite and pro-Turkish policies. In his Mutazilitism, he was as militant and intolerant as Mutasim. He actively persecuted those who refused to accept its doctrines. For this reason, his character had been much maligned by the Orthodox writers in later ages. He was depicted as weak, arbitrary and rapacious, extorting money and wealth out of his viziers and officials as Harun did from the Barmakides. This charge was true, though

exaggerated. He was, on the whole, a generous, enlightened and scholarly Caliph, "forbearing and patient under annoyance". He patronised literature and science and promoted industry and agriculture. But, like his father, he committed the mistake of favouring the Turks and belittling the influence and power of the Arabs and Persians. Owing to these reasons, his brief reign of six years was full of revolts and risings from one end of the Caliphate to the other.

Revolts in Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia and Arabia. The Kharijis revolted in Mosul; the Kurds rose in Persia, while an Umayyad leader, known as al-Moburqa, the Veiled one, raised the standard of revolt in Syria. Al-Moburqa overran the whole valley of Jordan. At the same time, a new revolt broke out at Damascus. But the Caliph's army suppressed these rebellions one by one. Al-Moburqa was captured and brought to Samarra. In Arabia, the Bedouin tribes of Banu Sulaym and others, finding no other source of livelihood, reverted again to their ancient custom of attacking and plundering their peaceful but richer neighbours. They plundered the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina and attacked the caravans of pilgrims and merchants. The Caliph despatched his Turkish general, Bugha, against them, who restored peace in the Holy Land of Hijaz.

Origin of "Sultan" : Turkish Ascendency established. Wathiq took a step which firmly established the power and ascendency of the Turks over the Abbaside Caliphs. It was the institution of the office of "sultan". On the insistence of one of his Turkish chiefs named Ashnas, Wathiq granted him the title of "Sultan", which meant that he was not only a military commander but also the holder of all secular authority. It implied that the Caliph was merely a spiritual head of the Empire, devoid of all but nominal power. This institution became another long step in the direction of reducing the Caliph to the position and role of a mere figurehead in the governmental system of the Abbaside Caliphate.

Persecution of the Orthodox Ulema. Wathiq was a zealous Mutazilite and instituted an inquisition on the Orthodox Ulema, which infuriated the people of Baghdad. They plotted against the Caliph, led by Ahmad bin Nasr who had a great following in the city. The plot was discovered. Ahmad bin Nasr was arrested and brought to Samarra. He was subjected to Mutazilite test, and was condemned to death.

Death of Wathiq. Wathiq died in August, 847. "With his death", writes Ameer Ali, "ended the glory of the Abbasides. For the next two centuries their history presents a confused picture of sovereigns coming to the throne without power, and descending to the grave without regret."

CHAPTER 21

DECLINE AND DISINTEGRATION OF THE ABBASIDE CALIPHATE

From Mutawakkil to Mustakfi 847-946/232-334 A. H.

THE TURKISH ASCENDENCY. 847-945.

Accession of Al-Mutawakkil: Wathiq did not nominate any one to succeed him. His Wazir, Chief Qazi and other courtiers wanted to place his young son, Muhammad, on the throne, but the Turkish chiefs, led by Wasif and Itakh, opposed them. They favoured Wathiq's brother, Jafar, whom they elected to the throne with the title of *al-Mutawakkil ala Illah*. Mutawakkil ruled for fifteen years, from 847 to 861 A. D. He was a cruel and vindictive ruler, given to debauchery. But he strove hard to restore his power and position as a Caliph by seeking the support of the Orthodox opinion. For this reason, he began the persecution of the Mutazilites. He was, however, unable to restrain the increasing power of the Turks or to stop the decline and disintegration of his Caliphate.

His cruelties. Soon after his accession, Mutawakkil arrested the Wazir of Wathiq, named Ibn-ul-Zayyat. He was cast in a prison where he was put in a torture-machine, a press with spikes to pierce an unfortunate victim, which the Wazir had himself invented. After several days of agony, the Wazir died. A year after, in 848, Itakh the Turkish commander of the Caliph's bodyguard while on the way to Mecca was also arrested and imprisoned in Baghdad. He had insulted the Caliph over a cup of wine when the two were revelling together. He died in the prison of thirst, because water was denied to him. At the same time several other men were thrown into prison where they lingered on till the death of the Caliph.

Restoration of Orthodoxy: Persecution of the Mutazila. Mutawakkil's reign marked the return to Orthodoxy. The Mutazilite heresy, popular with the Caliphs since Mamun, was now denounced and the "uncreatedness" or eternity of the Quran was upheld with the power of the State. The Mutazilite teachers, professors and preachers were persecuted by the orders of the Caliph. They were driven out of the mosques and colleges, the royal court and from the streets in towns and cities. Even public profession of Mutazilite doctrines was made a punishable offence. The Mutazilite

leaders like the Chief Qazi, Ibn Abu Daud and his sons were imprisoned and their properties confiscated. Abu Daud died in perion. Those Orthodox Ulema who had suffered at the hands of the three preceeding Caliphs were now restored to royal favour and popular influence. Thus Orthodoxy became the state-religion.

Persecution of the Alides and the non-Muslims. Mutawakkil was also anti-Shi'ite. He thus reversed the pro-Shia policy of his three predecessors. He did so to win the support of the people of Baghdad in order to counterbalance the increasing power of the Turks. The tomb of Imam Husayn at Kerbala was razed to the ground and ploughed up and pilgrimage to Kerbala was forbidden. The Alide property at Fadak was confiscated. Ibn as-Sikkit, the famous grammarian, was trampled under foot by the Caliph's Turkish bodyguard for his Shi'ite leanings. At the same time, the Christians and Jews who were employed in the offices of the State were turned out. In order to distinguish them from the Muslim citizens, they were ordered to wear distinctive clothing and ride on donkeys only: riding horses was reserved for the Muslims.

Revolts and invasions. In 851 A. D., a revolt broke out in Armenia. It was suppressed by the Turkish commander Bugha. A revolt in Azerbaijan was also quelled without difficulty. In Upper Egypt, where gold-mines were situated, a pagan tribe led by a chief called Ali Baba revolted. This revolt was suppressed after much bloodshed. In the East, the Tahiride power began to decline and the Suffarides began to oust them from Khurasan. But these events were beyond the control of the Caliph, for the East had become virtually independent. Encouraged by the internal troubles of the Abbaside Caliphate the Byzantines invaded Egypt, and raided Muslim possessions in Asia Minor. In Egypt, their fleet raided the towns in the Delta of the Nile, such as Tennis and Damietta, and returned with prisoners and booty. A more serious rebellion broke out in Hims in Syria and continued for some time till suppressed by the Caliph's forces.

Mutawakkil had strong pro-Arab sympathies. Partly for this reason and partly to escape from the Turkish domination, he transferred his capital to Damascus after twelve years stay in Samarra. But he again returned to Samarra after a short time as the climate of Damascus did not suit him. Near Samarra he built a magnificent palace which he celled Jafariya after his name.

Assassination of Mutawakkil: Dec. 861. Mutawakkil was an extravagant and cruel debaucher. He extorted large sums of money from his officials and Turkish commanders. Becoming tired of his cruelties and extortions, the disgruntled Turkish com-

manders, headed by Wasif and Bugha the Junior, conspired with the Caliph's eldest son, al-Muntasir. The Caliph had displeased Muntasir by nominating his favourite second son, al-Mutazz. He also publicly insulted him many a time in the court. One night in December, 861 A. D., when the Caliph had drunk himself senseless in a nocturnal carousal and was left alone in his room, the conspirators entered and assassinated him in his bed. In spite of the praise given to him by the later historians, Mutawakkil's death was not mourned by the people. His extravagance, tyranny, cruelty and self-indulgence had made him unpopular. By murdering him, the Turks became king-makers. The death of Mutawakkil symbolised the rapid decline of the Abbasides, hastened by the rise of independent principalities in the East and West, the ascendency of the Turks and the growing weakness of his successors.

Al-Muntasir 861-62 : The patricide, al-Muntasir, did not get any good for his evil deed. He was made the Caliph by his Turkish fellow-conspirators, but soon fell foul with them. He was found dead within six months of his accession, perhaps poisoned by the Turks.

Al-Musta'in 862-64 : The Turkish chiefs had no liking for Muntasir's brother and elected a grandson of Mutasim, entitled al-Musta'in as Caliph. He ruled only for three years, 862-64. He had, however, no authority and was a tool of the Turkish chief, Bugha. He soon got tired of the Turkish tyranny and escaped from Samarra to Baghdad where the Arab soldiers were predominant. But the Turks pursued him there, defeated the Arabs and forced him to abdicate. They took al-Mutazz, the second son of Mutawakkil, out of prison and proclamied him the next Caliph. Musta'in was murdered soon after.

Al-Mutazz. 864-69 : He ruled for five years, 864-69. His reign is nothing but an endless story of riots and murders. A sort of civil war went on between the capitals, Samarra and Baghdad, the Turks being predominant in the former and the Arabs in the latter. The Turkish chiefs, Wasif and Bugha were murdered by their rebellious soldiery. But Wasif's sons, Saleh and Musa made the Caliph their puppet. Another Turkish chief, Babikial, became the Wazir. Being appointed governor of Egypt, he sent there another Turkish leader, Ahmad bin Tulun, as his deputy. But Tulun soon became a virtually independent ruler and founded the Tulunid dynasty of Egypt. In Samarra, the extravagant luxuries and revelries of the Caliph and his Court made the Caliph bankrupt. The Turkish soldiery mutinied for arreas of pay, and arrested his secretary for extorting money from him. At last, Saleh, Musa and Babikial led their rebellious soldiers to the palace of the Caliph, dragged

him out and thrashed him thoroughly. Then they threw him in a dungeon where he died without food and water.

Al-Muhtadi : 869-70. The Turks now elected a son of Wathiq as Caliph with the title of al-Muhtadi. He was apparently a man of retiring and unassuming habits. But he turned out to be a firm and virtuous ruler and tried to restore life to the Caliphate. But he came too late. Earlier he might have made the Arabs and the Persians an equal power. But now the Turkish slave-soldiers and commanders were too strong for them. After a brief reign of a year, filled with riots and Turkish cruelties, he was forced to abdicate and died a few days later.

Al-Mutamid : 870-92. On Muhtadi's deposition, the leading courtiers took out of prison the surviving eldest son of Mutawakkil and proclaimed him Caliph under the title of al-Mutamid. He ruled for twenty-two years which was unexpectedly an era of comparative peace and prosperity. Even the Turkish commanders, like Musa bin Bugha, remained loyal to the Caliph. The real power, however, was not in the hands of the Caliph but of his brother, al-Muwaffaq. Being a more war-like prince, he fought a long-drawn war with the Zanji rebels in Lower Iraq.

THE SLAVE REVOLT OF THE ZANJ : 869-83

Slavery in Medieval Islam. Like the Roman Empire of ancient times, the Abbaside Caliphate had now become a slave-run society. The slaves were employed not only as domestic servants, concubines and soldiers, but also as workers and cultivators on the farms, fields and mines, owned by the caliphs, and their coutiers, grandees. They were officials also, big landlords and enterpreneurs.

There was a kind of sorting out of the slaves. Those slaves who were captured or bought from the northern and cooler countries of Central Asia, Transcaucasia and Europe, being of fair complexion and beautiful features, were mostly employed as demostic servants, singing or dancing slave-girls, concubines and soldiers. They were called *Faraghina*, if of Central Asian origin, and *Saqlabiya* if of Europeon origin and *Maghriba*, if of Berber origin. But those who were of dark complexion and ugly features, mostly of African or Negro origin, were employed as labourers and workers on the farms and mines. They were called the *Zanj*, or the Negro slaves.

The Zanj in Lower Iraq. Though much of the Abbaside economy was based on the labour of the free or semi-free

peasants and artisans, there were some places and regions where slave-labour was now increasingly employed. It was particularly so in the marshes and swamps of the Tigris and Euphrates in Lower Iraq. There the slaves were employed for manual labour on a number of large-scale enterprises, such as salt-mines, drainage of marshes, large agricultural farms and the fleet of boats and ships which plied between Baghdad and Basra. They were mostly the Zanj or Negro slaves, bought or captured in East Africa. They worked in gangs, each consisting of five hundred to five thousand men, and even fifteen thousand men, supervised by overseers and task-masters. These slaves were herded together in settlements. Hundreds and sometimes thousands of these slave were owned by a single landlord or enterpreneur. But they lived a miserable existence, with hard labour and bare subsistence. According to Arab historians, they were provided with only coarse grain, flour and dates as their food. Many of these Negro slaves were of recent arrival and could not speak Arabic. Many of them worked on the salt-petre mines east of Basra. They were employed by the wealthy men of the city in draining the salt marshes in order to prepare the ground for agriculture and to extract the salt for sale.

Origin of the Zanj Rebellion. The revolt of the Zanj or Negro slaves began in 869 A. D. during the reign of Caliph Muhtadi. But it assumed serious proportions in the reign of the next Caliph, Mutamid. Its leader was a Persian known as Ali bin Muhammad, who claimed Alide descent. He was nicknamed as "al-Khabees" due to the bitter hatred which his Slave Revolt excited. He soon proved himself to be the Sparticus of the Abbaside Caliphate. In September, 869, he excited the Zanji slaves of the saltpetre marshes near Basra to revolt, on the proclamation of freedom from slavery. He promised the Zanjis liberty, wealth and large booty by plundering their rich masters. He pointed out the miserable existence the slaves lived and claimed that "God would liberate them through him and that he would raise their status and make them masters of slaves and wealth and houses." On his standard of revolt he inscribed a verse from the Quran which he interpreted as Quranic injunction against slavery. Thus his political movement was given a spiritual or religious colouring, a common practice in all political movements of the Middle Ages.

In spite of this, Ali bin Muhammad's revolt lacked a constructive programme of reform and abolition of slavery as such. He only sought to free the Zanji slaves from their miserable existence. By promising wealth, plunder and slaves, he attracted huge multitudes of slaves to him. With every success more and more slaves in the mines and fields, towns and

cities of Lower Iraq flocked under his banner. The run-away demestic slaves from towns and cities also joined his servile armies. Even the peasants and cultivators filled his ranks, and the Bedouin tribes, ever ready to plunder rich and peaceful towns and cities, were attracted in large numbers to the armies of Ali bin Muhammad. Though of Shi'ite origin, Ali bin Muhammad joined hands with the Kharijis, partly because these equalitarian anarchists regarded all Muslims, whether Negroes or Arabs, as equal, and partly because they justified the enslavement of other Muslims who rejected their kind of Islam. The Muslims captured from the armies of the Caliph were made the slaves of the Zanji rebels.

The Zanji reveolt spread like a wild fire throughout the delta of the Lower Iraq. They first took to the field in September, 869, and, within two years, made themselves masters of the whole delta of the Euphrates from Wasit to Basra and Ahwaz in South Persia. Their military record was brilliant. They inflicted defeat after defeat on the armies of the Caliph sent against them, from whom they seized arms and men. The black slave-soldiers in Caliph's armies deserted to their side. In June, 870, they captured and plundered the flourishing port-city of Ubulla. After these successes, the Zanj founded a new capital of their own in the middle of the marsh-land in Lower Iraq which they called al-Mukhtara, the Independent. Their strength lay in the slave-settlements in Lower Iraq, where they built a chain of fortresses and strongholds and in the fleet which they controlled.

For nearly fifteen years, the Zanj was a terror of Lower Iraq and Baghdad. The slave-rebels captured and sacked Basra in September, 871. In 878, they captured Wasit, the military stronghold of the Caliph in Iraq, and advanced upto 25 kilometres of Baghdad. In the south, they sacked Ahwaz. In alarm, the Caliph Mutamid summoned his warrior-brother, Muwaffaq, to save Baghdad. However, Muwaffaq was unable to stem the advance of the Zanj, because Baghdad was then threatened from a new direction. The Suffarid ruler of Khurasan, Yakub bin Layth, advanced from Hamadan upon Baghdad and was repulsed with difficulty in 875-78. When freed from the Khurasani danger, Muwaffaq turned with his whole strength against the Zanj. He adopted the method of fighting with the fleet against the amphibious enemy. By promises of pardon and rewards, and state pensions, he attracted a large number of the Zanji rebels to desert their leaders. Thus by military action and diplomacy, he gradually drove the Zanjis from their strongholds and captured their territory. By February, 881, he had expelled them from all places except al-Mukhtara, which also fell to the Caliph's army by assualt in

August, 883. Thus ended the great Slave Revolt. The Zanji leader, Ali bin Muhammad, was captured and killed. His head was taken to Baghdad. Perched on a pole, it was paraded through the streets of the capital which were illuminated and shops shut in celebration of the victory. Like the Peasant Revolts of the Persian heresiarchs, the Slave Revolt of the Zanj did not leave behind any effect on the subsequent history and society of Islam. The slaves continued to live the same miserable life and lowly status as before. For this Ali bin Muhammad and his associates were also to some extent responsible. They had no idea of social reform, and no programme of abolishing slavery as such. Their aims were only to free the existing slaves and make them the masters of the free men and women.

In the meanwhile, the Abbaside Caliphate continued to shrink. Egypt under the Tulunids had practically become independent, while Ahmad bin Tulun and after him, his son Khumarvieh, who succeeded him in 884, extended their power over Syria and a part of Mesopotamia, *i.e.*, Mosul. Thus the Abbaside rule was now confined to Iraq and a part of southern Persia and Arabia.

Al-Mutazid: 892-902 A.D. Mutamid was succeeded by his nephew, al-Mutazid, the son of Muwaffaq, who was the virtual ruler during Mutamid's reign. By his energetic rule, he restored to some extent the decaying power of the House of Abbas. He was kind towards the Shia and the Alides, but cruel towards the Kharijis and the Zanji rebels, when they fell into his hands. During ten years of his reign, the Samanids displaced the Saffarids in Khurasan and paid tribute to the Caliph. His greatest achievement was the restoration of Egypt to the Caliphate, where the Tulunid government had sunk into anarchy and impotence in face of the Carmathian attacks.

ISMAILISM AND THE QARAMITA

Origin of the Ismailis and the Carmathians. Since its very origin, Shiaism had been split into two tendencies, a moderate and an extreme one. The moderate Shias followed the Twelve Imams of the House of Ali and Fatima. Hence they came to be called the Twelvers or **Athna-Ushriya**. The extremist Shia regarded various descendents of Hazrat Ali, as their Imams. Among them were the **Ismailis**, who recognised Ismail, the son of the Sixth Imam, Jafar as-Sadiq, as their Imam and not the Seventh Imam of the Twelvers, named Musa al-Kazim, who became the Imam in 765 A. D. on the death of his father, Jafar as-Sadiq. As Ismail died or disappeared in the life-time of his father, Jafar as-Sadiq, his followers accepted his son, Muhammad bin Ismail as their Seventh, the last and, therefore, the Perfect Imam. In course of time, the Ismailis

also split into various sects. Three of them became most famous, viz., the *Qaramita* or Carmathians of Iraq, Syria and Arabia, the *Fatimids* of North Africa and Egypt, and the *Hashisheen* of Persia. For nearly five centuries, from the 8th to the 13th, the Ismailis and their branches remained the most revolutionary sects of Islam, They organised throughout the Islamic world a far-flung network of secret societies and propagandists or '*du'at*', headed by a Committee of Elders and presided by the "living" Imam. Their followers and propagandists were educated and trained for secret work. We shall describe the doctrines and methods of propaganda of Ismailism and its various branches in a later chapter. Here we deal only with what they actually did on the arena of Islamic history. It would suffice to say that they passionately believed in the appearance of a Mahdi who would usher in a millenium of faith, justice, equity and happiness for their followers.

Social crisis of the Abbaside Caliphate. It may be remarked here that at this time, the end of the nineth and the beginning of the tenth century A. D., the Abbaside society and state were passing through a period of deep social crisis. Though the peasant and slave revolts were crushed and drowned in blood, yet strong and widespread feelings of discontent existed in the poorer, the dispossessed and the under-privileged sections and classes of the Abbaside society. It was caused by the growing concentration of wealth and capital in the hands of the small sections of the ruling families, the officials, the army commanders, and the wealthy merchants and traders in the towns and cities. The slaves were rebellious for they were cruelly oppressed by their masters. The peasants were discontented, for they were heavily taxed and dispossessed by the hordes of extortionate tax-collectors and by the constant civil war and oppressions of the greedy Turkish soldiers and commanders, whom their lands were allotted by the Caliphs or the ruling party. The Bedouin tribes of Iraq, Syria and Arabia were dissatisfied for the Abbaside Caliphs who now filled their armies with Turkish or Turkoman mamluks or slave-soldiers and thus denied them the source of income to which they were accustomed since the early conquests of Islam. The Berbers of North Africa were ever resentful of the Arab rule. In the towns and cities the workers, artisans and handicraftsmen were discontented for they were squeezed by their wealthy fellow-citizens, the merchants, bankers and traders. Above all, the whole economic life was disrupted by the endless civil wars, revolts and rebellions on the one side and by the extravagance of the Central Government of the Caliphate, its financial extortions and heavy taxation, and even outright confiscation of property and income. These feelings of discontent and resentment were often expressed in the form of rejection of the Orthodox doctrines of Islam which were upheld by the Abbaside Caliphs and their Ulema and by other "Sunni" rulers.

A poet of this period expressed these feelings thus:

"No certainly, I shall not pray to God, as long as I shall be poor.

Let us leave prayers to the Shaikh al-Jalil, to Fa'iq,

To the chiefs of armies, whose cellars bulge with measures.

But why should I pray? Am I mighty?

Have I a palace, horses, rich clothes and golden bells?

To pray, when I do not possess a single inch of earth, would be pure hypocrisy".

Ismailis and Social crisis. Such was the social crisis and the feelings of discontent and strife which it engendered. It proved to be a fertile soil for the Ismailian propagandists and leaders. They sowed the seeds of sedition and revolt against the Abbasides and other rulers all over the Caliphate. Their propaganda about the return of the Mahdi "from the House of the Prophet", the Ahl al Bayt, who would deliver the dispossessed, the oppressed and the unprivileged from their misery and would usher in an era of justice, equity and happiness, fell upon willing ears. Partly for these reasons and partly for the hopes of plunder and speedy enrichment at the expense of the existing wealthy classes, large multitudes of the peasants, slaves, town-dwellers and Bedouins swelled the ranks of the followers of the Ismailian propagandists and leaders. It must, however, be remarked that, like the Zanji leader, Ali bin Muhammad, these leaders also had no idea or ideal of social reform, no programme of social amelioration or progress except that of immediate relief by plundring and dispossessing the existing classes of the rich and the rulers, Abbaside and others. Their religious doctrine and theological teachings and interpretations were merely a cloak for political action and not a plan of social reform or progress.

Ismaili Leaders : Abdullah bin Maimun-al-Qaddah. For nearly a century after the death or disappearance of their Seventh and Last Imam, Muhammad bin Ismail, his followers, called *Ismailis or Seveners or al-Sabiya*, remained only an insignificant branch of the Shia. But in 873-74 A. D., appeared a man, named Abdullah bin Maimun al-Qaddah, who transformed Ismailism into a dynamic force in the politys of the Abbaside Caliphate then in the throes of a growing social crisis. His father, Maimun, was a Persian, a native of Ahwaz and belonged to an Extremist Shia sect which regarded the Sixth Imam, Jafar as-Sadiq, as a god. Abdullah claimed himself to be a prophet and performed

miracles, such as having knowledge of things happening at remote distances. Though these miracles were performed with the aid of carrier-pigeons and such other tricks, they enabled him to collect large multitudes of credulous followers around him, deeply impressed as they were by his prophetic powers. He also claimed to have founded a new religion, which combined all other religions. It was called the Seventh, the Last and the most Perfect religion. Besides his prophetic powers and theological claims, Abdullah bin Maimun possessed one great power, a deep understanding of human nature and its weaknesses and also great organisational ability, which enabled him to create a tremendous force out of the Ismailian network of secret societies and propagandists. Being forced to move from place to place by the Abbaside police, he lived at Jerusalem, Basra and finally settled at Salamiyya near Hims in Syria. From there he despatched his "*da'is*" or propagandists in various directions. He became the "living" Imam and the real founder of Ismailism. He died two years later in about 875 A. D., but left a powerful organisation for his son and successor, Muhammad, and others. We shall meet them again in subsequent pages as the forefathers of the Fatimids of North Africa and Egypt.

Hamdan Qarmat, and the rise of the Qaramita. One of the "da'is" or propagandists of Abdullah bin Muimum was a Persian, named Hamdan bin Al-Ashath, nicknamed Qarmat on account of his dwarfed body and bent legs. Abdullah sent him to canvass in Kufa, where he gathered a large number of followers, known after him as *Qirmitis or Qaramita, the Carmathians*. Hamdan Qarmat came to Kufa at the time when the Zanji rebels were still strong at Basra. He tried to join hands with them, but failed to come to terms. Soon after the end of the Zanji insurrection, his followers became very strong in the provinces of Iraq, Arabia and Syria. They comprised mainly the Bedouin elements in these provinces. Qarmat died in or about 890. But for the next one hundred years from 890 to 990 A. D., his followers, the Qaramita, spread fire and sword throughout the lands of the declining Caliphate. They revolted constantly during the reign of the Caliph Mutazid in 890, 892,900 and 902, but were suppressed more or less successfully by the armies of the Caliph. Many of the Qirmiti leaders and rebels were captured and hanged or imprisoned by the Abbasides, but still they collected fresh followers to revolt once again due to the widespread social discontent. At last two of their leaders, named Zikrawayh and Abu Said al-Jannabi, both Persians, succeeded in capturing Bahrayn or al-Hasa, the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula. It became their base for all future operations against the Abbaside Rulers.

In 900, they inflicted a decisive defeat on the forces of the Caliph Mutazid, near Basra. Only the general of the Caliph's army escaped alive to tell the tale of the disaster. In the same year, 900 A. D., arose the Fatimid power in North Africa.

Al-Muktafi : 902-907. After the death of Mutazid, his son al-Muktafi succeeded to the throne. During his six years reign the Tulunid power vanished from Egypt which was then restored to the Abbasides. The Caliph was popular with the people of Baghdad, but he had to face many rebels all around. Among them the most dangerous were the Carmathians or the Qaramita, who now burst from Bahrayn over the neighbouring provinces in Persia, Iraq and Syria. The Caliph also fought with the Byzantines and captured some cities like Adalia from them.

Al-Muqtadir : 907-932 A.D. On his death, Muktafi was succeeded by his brother, Jafar, with the title of al-Muqtadir. He ruled for twenty-five years, but the government was in the hands of his able viziers. During his reign, the Carmathians ravaged the provinces of Iraq and Syria and plundered the pilgrim caravans. At the same time, the Fatimids of North Africa firmly established their power by defeating the last of the Aghlabide ruler, Ziadatullah bin Aghlab. An Alide established his rule in Tabaristan, after wresting it from the Samanids of Khurasan. At the end of Muqtadir's reign, government came into the hands of his mother. The Caliph was killed in 932 by one of his insurgent nobles.

Orthodox Reaction: During al-Muqtadir's reign, the famous hospital, known as *al-Muqtadiriyyah* after him, was founded. The Orthodox Ulema, led by the Hanbalis, were supreme in Baghdad. Their attempts to enforce orthodoxy and their persecution of the Shia and the Mutazila frequently led to riots in the capital. The Hanbalis often raided the houses and bookshops and burnt the books and literature which they considered objectionable from the Orthodox point of view. One of these riots in Baghdad was over the funeral of the famous Arabian historian, at-Tabari, whom the Hanbalis denounced as a heretic and refused to give his dead-body a decent burial.

Al-Qahir : 932-34: On the murder of al-Muqatadir, the Turkish commanders and courtiers chose another son of Mutazid as Caliph with the title of al-Qahir b'Illah, the Victorious by the grace of the Lord. In spite of his martial name, Qahir proved himself to be a more miserable ruler than his predecessor, Muqtadir. Outwardly pious, he was really cruel. The extravagance of the Court which had always depleted the treasury of

the Caliphate and disrupted its finances, now made it bankrupt. The Turkish soldiers' pay was long in arrears. The Caliph put to death his Wazir, Munis, who had served him and his predecessors so faithfully. At last his tyranny and taxes becoming intolerable, the Turkish commanders and courtiers conspired against him. One night, when the Caliph was dead drunk, they overpowered him and blinded him. He was deposed and thrown into a prison. After eleven years, he was set free, but led a miserable life as a beggar in the streets of Baghdad. To such a low condition the Abbaside Caliphate had now sunk! During his brief reign, Egypt again became an independent kingdom under its Turkish governor, Ikhshid.

Muhammad ar-Razi: "Last of the real Caliphs" 934-40. After the deposition of al-Qahir, the Turkish nobles made a son of Muqtadir named Muhammad as Caliph with the title of *ar-Razi b'Illah*. But he was a caliph only in name ; all authority was in the hands of his Wazir and Turkish nobles. "With him" writes Ameer Ali, "vanished the last vestiges of power or dignity that had been left to the Caliphs".

Muttaqi : 940-44. On Razi's death, Bajkam, the Ameer ul Umra, ordered the courtiers in Baghdad to elect, or to be more accurate, to appoint an Abbaside as Caliph. Their choice fell upon Razi's brother who became the Caliph with the title of al-Muttaqi. Bajkam died soon after and a Persian chief al-Baridi, against whom Bajkam was fighting, attacked Baghdad. Persuaded by Ibn Raiq, the Caliph fled to Mosul, ruled by the Arab princes of Hamdan. With their aid, he returned to Baghdad. But the Turkish mercenaries and citizens of Baghdad drove out the Shi'ite Hamdanid princes from the capital within a year. A Turkish leader, named Tuzun became the Ameer-ul-Umra. The Caliph again fled to Mosul, and from there to Raqqa, where he remained as a miserable refugee Caliph. But he was deposed and blinded by Tuzun in 944.

Mustakfi : 944-46. Tuzun installed a brother of the blinded Caliph as his successor with the significant title of al-Mustakfi b'Illah, "for whom the Lord sufficeth". During his brief reign, the rising power of the Buwayhid princes extended upto the very gates of Baghdad. Tuzun died. His successor, Abu Jafar, the new Ameer ul Umra, was unable to resist the Buwayhid advance upon Baghdad, which was reduced to great distress. The Caliph at last invited the Buwayhid ruler to become the Ameer-ul-Umra with the title Moizz-ud-Daula, in 945. The Buwayhid prince, suspecting the pro-Turkish leanings of the Caliph and a Turkish attack upon Baghdad from Mosul, deposed and blinded the Caliph.

Rise of the Ameer-ul-Umra. The disappearance of the Caliph's power and authority was due to the rise of a new officer, called the *Ameer-ul-Umra*, who exercised all governmental authority. His name was mentioned in the Khutba along with that of the Caliph, signifying that his authority was co-equal with that of the nominal Head of the Caliphate. The helpless ar-Razi was compelled to confer the office of the Ameer-ul-Umra on his governor of Wasit, named Muhammad bin Raiq, for whom it was especially created. Soon after, another Turkish chief and rival of Ibn Raiq, named Bajkam, became the Ameer-ul-Umra. Thus the sceptre passed from the hands of the Abbaside Caliphs into the hands of their own officers. This change also lessened the authority of the Wazir, existing since the very beginning of the Abbaside Caliphate, for the "wazir" of the Ameer-ul-Umra was more powerful than that of the Caliph. The same decline in the authority and power of the Abbaside Caliphate was shown in the territorial extent of their rule. The nominal Caliph ruled only Baghdad and a small territory around it, while all the provinces of the Caliphate had become independent under their governors or rebel-leaders. Even the Umayyad rulers of Spain who did not hitherto style themselves as "caliphs" now assumed this title. Indeed, the year 940 A.D. when Razi died, may well be regarded the end of the Abbaside Caliphate. It is said that in that year the statue of a horseman, placed at the top of the Caliph's palace fell down in a storm. It used to turn its lance in the direction from which any revolt or danger threatened the Caliphate. Its fall was, indeed, symbolic enough, for now the Abbaside Caliphate existed nowhere, not even in the palace of the Caliph who was a mere puppet of his Ameer ul Umra. One important reason of this decline and disintegration was the terror and destruction in Iraq and elsewhere wrought by the Carmathians. In the East, the Buwayhids rose to power in 934. Bajkam's attempt to suppress them failed, as we have said above.

Rise and Spread of the Carmathians. The reasons for the rise and spread of the Carmathians were many. We have already mentioned them above. They were, to mention important ones, (*i*) the pro-Persian and later the pro-Turkish policy of the Abbaside Caliphs which deprived the Arabs of the opportunity of military enlistment and pension, and closed the only source of income of the Arabs : It made the hungry and predatory Bedouin to follow any one who promised plunder and rapine, (*ii*) the surviving Zanji slaves after their great revolt who now joined the ranks of the Carmathian hordes, (*iii*) the dispossessed and hard-pressed artisans and craftsmen of the town and cities, and (*iv*) the spiritual appeal of Ismailism which captured the hearts of those men who were too philosophic or too polytheistic to accept the Orthodox doctrines of Sunnism, now dominant in the Abbaside Caliphate. The Orthodox writers charged the Carmathians of communistic

practices in matters of property and women. The truth in this charge was that they practised among their followers a sort of communal system regarding property, and granted much freedom to their women. But it was exactly these practices which won them the support of the Bedouin tribes who themselves lived a sort of communal, equalitarian and democratic life and had no idea or respect for individual ownership. Their communistic appeals were supported by Quranic verses, one of which they had inscribed on their banners : "We (the Most High) show Our favour unto those who are weak in the land, and make them leaders and heirs (of the kingdom)."— Sura xxviii, 10.

The Carmathians were not Muslims at heart. Outwardly they posed as Muslims but among themselves and inwardly they acted against the real teachings and dogmas of Islam. They were ruled by their white-clothed "Iqdaniyya", the Supreme Council, which had full powers to disregard and discard any Islamic principle and practice as it liked. Like the Kharijis, they justified the murder of a Muslim who did not accept their beliefs by "purifying" his soul with the sword. Thus they massacred thousands upon thousands of Muslims under their oft-repeated formula : "Purify them".

War against the Carmathians. We have already said that the Carmathians had revolted and captured Bahrayn and Basra in the last days of the Caliph Mutazid in 900 A. D. From there they soon burst over Iraq and other neighbouring provinces of the Caliphate, during the reigns of Muktafi, Muqtadir and their successors. At that time Zikrawayh retired into a cave. But his two sons, known as the "Master of the She-Camel" and "the Man with the Mole", continued his work of ravaging the Caliphate. First the elder brother, the Master of the She-camel, burst over Syria and spread fire and sword upto the very gates of Damascus, where he was killed by a naphtha-ball in 903. Then the younger brother, the 'Man with the Mole, who became the "Ameer-ul-Momineen" of the Carmathians, continued the marauding and pillaging in Syria. So great were his ravages that the Caliph Muktafi had to send his best general against him. The fanatics were defeated and the "Man with the Mole" was captured in December, 903. Brought to Baghdad with many of his followers, he was mercilessly cut to pieces and his head was paraded in the streets of the capital on a pole. Soon after, their father, Zikrawayh, emerged from his cave and called upon his followers to spread fire and destruction once again. He was hailed as a deliverer by them, who were filled with a wild enthusiasm. They routed an army sent by the Caliph against them. At this time, Zikrawayh conceived a diabolical plan to massacre and plunder the caravans of the pilgrims going to Mecca. Untold miseries and butcheries were inflicted upon the unfortunate pilgrims. On one occasion, the Carmathians killed

twenty thousand men and women, plundered huge wealth and carried away large number of captive men and women. At last, in about 907, the Caliph Muktafi sent his Turkish general, Wasif, against them. They were defeated and Zikrawayh was captured. He died of his wounds on the way to Baghdad.

A few years after, in the reign of Muqtadir, the Carmathians again burst out of Bahrayn which was still in their hands. They were led by Abu Tahir Sulaiman al-Jannabi, a son of Abu Said al-Jannabi mentioned above. By this time the Fatimids of Africa had established their power. The two Ismailian sects now joined hands against the Abbaside Caliphate. In 919, Abu Tahir stormed and sacked Basra, and later in 923, he plundered Basra for seventeen days. The pilgrim caravans were again attacked and plundered, and the ravages of the fanatics reached as for apart as Mosul and Ahwaz. Then in 924, Abu Tahir al-Jannabi successively plundered and burnt Basra and Kufa. The pilgrim caravans were again attacked, plundered and butchered. In 929-30, he conceived the most diabolical plan. With an army of six hundred horsemen and nine hundred foot-soldiers he attacked Mecca, where he repeated the same horrors of rapine, slaughter and plunder, killing 30,000 Muslims, two thousands of whom were killed within Ka'ba itself. When returning, he carried the Black Stone with him to Bahrayn, where it remained for nearly twenty-two years. Abu Tahir continued his ravages, massacre and pillages till his death in 944 A.D.

End of the Carmathians. The Carmathians had captured and devastated the provinces of Ahwaz, Basra, Kufa, Syria, and Mesopotamia, and had established their power in Bahrayn and Yemen. With the death of Abu Tahir, the peak of their terror had passed. They now began to quarrel among themselves, which weakened their power. Moreover, the Fatimids conquered Egypt in 960 A. D. The former aliance between the Fatimids and the Carmathians turned into rivalry and war. The Fatimids even joined hands with the rulers of Baghdad against the Carmathians, who were at last wiped out from Syria, Iraq, etc., in 990 A. D. Only in such remote corners of the Islamic world as Bahrayn or Multan they continued to rule for several hundred years more. Their century-long depradations and rule had dealt a death-blow to the Abbaside Caliphate, which had shrunk upto Baghdad and its environs. Syria, Iraq, and other provinces passed into the hands of the Fatimids and other rivals of the Abbasides. One result of the Carmathian ravages was the decay of Kufa, which now rapidly sank into ruins: thus the Desert began to spread again and push back the Sown.

Rise of Independent Principalities.

We now turn to the independent principalities and rulers who

sprang into power both in the East and the West. This process had commenced in the days of Harun when the Aghlabids become virtually independent rulers of Qayrowan. But the real disintegration of the Abbaside Caliphate began during the reign of Muta.-wakkil, when the Tahirid governors of Khurasan became virtually independent. Thus started the decay in that part of the Abbaside Empire where it was actually born and where its real strength lay.

Khurasan under the Tahirids: 820-73. The first independent dynasty in Khurasan was founded by Tahir bin Hasan, the famous general of Mamun. For some inexplicable reasons, Mamun appointed him governor of Khurasan in 820 A. D. Two years later, he showed signs of independence, but died mysteriously soon after, Mamun was, however, constrained to appoint Tahir's sons Talha and Abdullah, as governors, thus making the government in Khurasan hereditary in Tahirid family. The Tahirids made Nishapur their capital. When one of his sons, Abdullah bin Tahir died in Mutasim's reign, the Caliph invested Abdullah's son, Tahir, with the government of Khurasan. Like his father, he was a just and enlightened ruler. When he died in 862, his son Muhammad became the ruler of Khurasan till he was driven out of the province in 873, by the Suffarids.

The Suffarids: 873-900. The Suffarid dynasty was founded in Sistan by Yaqub bin Layth al-Suffar (the Coppersmith). He was at first a brigand, but later joined service under the governor of Sistan. Then he conquered Sistan from the Tahirid rulers of Khurasan, of which it was a part. He soon extended his power into Persia proper as the Abbaside power was then fast declining. At last, in 873, he attacked Nishapur and put an end to the Tahirid dynasty, and established the Suffarid rule in Khurasan. Encouraged by his successes, Yaqub even marched upon Baghdad, but was defeated by Muwaffaq, the warlike regent and brother of the reigning Abbaside Caliph, Mutamid. Yaqub retired to his dominions and next year in 879, again marched against Baghdad, but died on the way. He was succeeded by his brother, Amr bin Layth, who made peace with Mutamid and obtained letters of investiture as the ruler of Khurasan from the Caliph.

The Samanids: 900-1000 A. D. The Samanids traced their descent from a man, named Saman, who was a caravan-leader. Caliph Mamun appointed his grandson Ahmad as the governor of Farghana in Transoxiana. The governorship of this part of Khurasan became hereditary in his family, even under the Tahirid rulers of that province. Ahmad was succeeded by his son Nasr. When Nasr died in 892, his son Ismail became virtually an independent ruler of Transoxiana, for the Suffarids did not extend their rule into that part of Khurasan. The Caliph Mutamid invested govern-

ment in his family, subject to the payment of a nominal tribute. Ismail was an energetic and just ruler. In 900 A. D., he attacked and conquered Khurasan from Amr bin Layth the Suffarid. He thus founded the Samanid dynasty in Khurasan which lasted for a century.

The Samanids were the most Persianised rulers Khurasan ever had since the end of the Sassanid Empire. They soon conquered the ephemeral Alide rulers of Tabaristan or Daylam. They were one of the most cultured dynasties of the East. Their capital was at Bukhara, which became a great centre of Islamic civilisation and culture along with Samarkand, the second flourishing city of the Samanid kingdom. These two cities rivalled Baghdad in prosperity, culture and learning. It was under the Samanids that the great physicians and philosophers like al-Razi and Ibn Sina lived. They patronised Persian language and literature which assumed its modern form during their epoch. In the last decades of the tenth century A. D. the Samanid power began to decline. Like the Abbaside Caliphs, they too began to employ Turkish slaves as officials and soldiers, who became as strong as their masters after some time. One of them, named Alptagin, revolted in 962 A. D. He captured Ghazni and founded the famous Ghaznavid dynasty of Ghazni and the Punjab. His successor was his freedman and son-in-law, Subaktagin. He and his son Mahmud of Ghazni became independent rulers of the East, duly recognised by the Abbaside Caliph, Al-Qadir. Khurasan become a part of the Ghaznavid kingdom.

Egypt under the Tulunids: 868-83. The second important province to break away from the Abbaside Empire was Egypt. Ahmad bin Tulun was a Turkish noble of slave origin in the Court of the Caliph Mutazz. He was appointed deputy by Babikiyal, the Wazir who was made governor of Egypt by the Caliph but sent Ahmad bin Tulun as his deputy there in 868 A. D. He too became independent of the Central Government at Baghdad. His power was based on a large and highly trained slave army. He helped the Caliphate in defending Syria and Asia Minor, then threatened by the Greeks while the Caliph's armies under Mawaffaq were engaged in a bitter struggle against the Zanji rebels. He died in 884 and was succeeded by his son, Khumarwayh, under whom the Tulunid power rapidly declined and ended in 903, when Egypt was temporarily restored to the Abbaside Caliphate. The Tulunid era in Egypt was one of prosperity, for the revenues of the province were now spent within it. It was marked by development of culture, especially of architecture, in Fustat, their capital, such as the mosque of Ahmad bin Tulun in Cairo, the palace of Khumarwayh.

Egypt under the Ikhshidids: 935-69. After a brief restoration of the Abbaside rule, Egypt again came under a new Turkish dynasty of the Ikhshidids in 935. The Caliph al-Razi appointed as governor one of his Turkish officials named Muhammad bin Taghj, a descendant of the princes of Ferghana, called Ikhshid. After the fashion of the day, he soon became an independent ruler and received from the weak Caliph Razi the title of Ikhshid. He was succeeded by his two sons, Abu'l Qasim (946-60) and Ali (960-6,) both of whom were weak and nominal rulers. Real power was in the hands of their able Abyssinian eunuch named Abu'l Misk Kafur, who remained the sole ruler of Egypt. Kafur was renowned for the generosity and luxury of his court. He won the panegyrics and later the satires of the famous Arab poet al-Mutanabbi. He fought constant wars against the Arab rulers of the Hamdanid dynasty of Mosul. Both Hijaz and Syria were parts of the Ikhshidid kingdom. But soon after Kafur's death, in 968, the last Ikhshidid ruler, the boy-king named Abu al-Fawaris Ahmad, lost the kingdom to the Fatimids of North Africa, in 969.

Other Petty Dynasties. With the rapid decline of the Abbaside-Caliphate during and after the Zanji Revolt and the ravages and devastations of the Carmathians in the reigns of Muktafi and his successors, several petty dynasties sprang up in almost every provincial town or city of the Empire, founded either by an ambitious governor, or by a rebellious adventurer. This state of affairs was aptly described as the age of "Tawwaf-ul Muluk', or petty dynasts, which fully illustrated the political anarchy and decay of the Abbaside Caliplate. Among them was the Carmathian kingdom or "republic" of al-Hasa in Bahrayn, founded by Abu Tahir al-Jannabi, the Carmathian leader.

The Hamdanids of Mosul : 929-91, and Aleppo : 944-1003. The lands around Mosul in Mesopotamia were inhabited by Arab tribes. During the wretched rule of the Caliph Muqtadir, pressed hard by the Carmathians in Iraq and Syria and by the Greeks in Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, rose an Arab chief of the Taghlib tribe, named Ameer Hamdan ibn Hamdun, the Lord of Mosul and Tikrit. He held the Greeks at bay. He thus founded the Shi'te Hamdanid Kingdom of Mosul in 929. Later, during the reign of pupet-Caliph al-Muttaqi. the grandsons of Ameer Hamdan, Nasir-ud-Daula and Sayf-ud-Daula became the guardians of the Caliph. They entered Baghdad, but were soon driven out from there by another Turkish commander, Tuzun. In 944, Sayf-ud-Daula advanced into Syria which was always ready to welcome an Arab ruler since the downfall of the Umayyads. He wrested Aleppo and Hims from the Ikhshidid governor of Syria. Sayf-ud-Daula thus became the founder of the Syrian dynasty of the Hamdanids of Aleppo, which lasted from

944 to 1003. Sayf-ud-Daula is famous for his life-long campaigns against the aggressive Byzantine Emperors. At the end of his twenty years struggle, in which he received no help from any other Muslim ruler, Sayf-ud-Daula was defeated by the Greeks who conquered large parts of Syria from Hamdanids. His successors were subdued by the Fatimids of Egypt, who successfully resisted further Byzantine advance into Syria.

The Hamdanids were great patrons of Arabic poety, literature and learning, which recalls the glorious age of Harun and Mamun. Such eminent men of poety, and philosophy as al-Mutanabbi, the famous Arabic poet, al-Farabi, the great philosopher, al-Isbahi the celebrated historian and writer of "Aghani" the eloquent preacher ibn-Nubatah who roused the people to a holy war against the Greeks, and the poet-philosopher Abu'l Ala al-Ma'arri lived in this period.

Rise of the Buwayhids : 934 A. D. At this time rose the dynasty of the Buwayhids in Fars in 934 A. D. They were sons of Buwayh, a Persian prince of Daylam. He was a leader of a Turkish horde, then swarming Central Asia and Persia in such the large numbers. The sons of Buwayh left for Persia, where they founded a petty principality of their own in Fars, like so many other adventurers in those days. But they soon extended their rule much farther and played a far greater role than other petty dynasts, as we shall describe later on.

CHAPTER 22

NOMADIC-FEUDAL OR SISYPHEAN CYCLES IN MEDIEVAL ISLAM: 945 TO *Circa* 1800 A. D.

The emergence of the Persianised Daylamites, and still more of the Seijuqids, as the ruling dynasties of the Abbaside Caliphate, introduced a new political, social, cultural and economic phenomenon into the history of Islam. It was the rise and fall of the ruling dynasties and the feudal elite classes of the successive kingdoms, sultanates or empires at the intervals of about a century or so for about a thousand years, till the incursion of the European imperialisms into the medieval *Dar al-Islam.* These successive cycles always began with the conquest of a decadent Islamic kingdom or sultanate by nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes, who then became the new ruling feudal classes of the newly-founded kingdom or empire. But in course of a few generations, these classes degenerated due to causes to be analysed presently, and were overthrown by the new nomadic tribal invaders, who also degenerated in the same way in a century or so and were swept away by yet another wave of nomadic conquerors. We have called these successive nomadic-feudal cycles as the Sisyphean cycles, after Sisyphus, a mythical Greek king, said to be punished by the gods for his greed, perfidy and predatory habits to the perpetual labour of carrying a rock uphill, which rolled down and had again to be rolled uphill. In Medieval Islam, the Sisyphus was the expansionist energy of the nomadic tribes of Central Asia, Mongolia, Transcaspia, North African Sahara and of other border-lands on the periphery of the Dar al-Islam.

Political and Social Changes in Early Islam. During the first three centuries of Islamic History, from 632 to 945 A. D., all the political changes and revolutions in the Islamic state and society were brought about by the internal or indigenous forces of the Muslim peoples themselves, at first the Arabs, then the Persians and later other subjects of the Umayyad and Abbaside Caliphates. In other words, these developments were the achievements of the internal elites from among the Muslim peoples and lands, *i.e.*, the results of the circulation of the internal elite classes. Thus the Umayyad Caliphs succeeded the Orthodox with the support of the Arabian tribalism, and the Abbasides supplanted the Umayyads with the support of the Persian or Khurasani Mawali and Persianised Arabs.

However, under the early Abbaside Caliphs, more particularly after Mamun (809-832), such conditions developed in the Abbaside state and society which retarded and stopped the circulation of the internal elites and opened the way for foreign elements to enter into the body politic of Medieval Islam. They were the foreign-born slaves, captured or purchased from the Turkish, Slavic (European), Negro and other lands on the periphery of the Dar al-Islam. The influx of such elements showed that no energy, initiative and enterprise were left among the Muslim peoples of the Caliphate, whether they were Arabs, or Persians, Berbers or others. This degeneration was the real cause of the retardation and arrest of the circulation of the internal elite groups from among the Muslim peoples. It produced a vacuum, political and social, in which the foreign elements stepped in, at first as the slaves of the decadent elites, but later as tribal invaders and conquerors, to rule the decadent Abbaside polity and society from one end of the Dar al-Islam to the other. So the Sisyphean or nomadic-feudal cycles always originated owing to the energy and initiative of the external elite groups and peoples, who, fortunately for Medieval Islam, accepted Islam a litte before or after they had secured the forcible entry into the Dar al-Islam.

Why did these cycles happen? A number of questions arise here. Why was Medieval Islam so degenerative as to always lie prostrate before every and any foreign invader? In other word, why were the medieval Muslims not able to defeat and crush foreign invaders on the very borders of the Dar al-Islam, or at least on the borders of their kingdoms or empires? The reasons lay, firstly and primarily, in the degenerative role of the kind of family system, evolved during the latter Umayyad and early Abbaside periods, that is, during the second and third centuries of the Islamic era, by the Ulema of the Fiqh and Shari'a, by their interpretations of the Quran and Sunnah. Secondly, it was due to the disintegrative role of the kinship society into which Medieval Islam had retrogressed during the same period. Let us now see, briefly, how did these forces and factors of degeneration and disintegration operate in the medival Islamic social and political life.

The Nomadic-Feudal Sisyphean Cycle: The First Generation: Every new Sisyphean cycle began with the invasion and conquest of a decadent Islamic kingdom/empire by some nomadic or semi-nomadic tribe or tribes, which were living on or near the borders of the Dar al-Islam or of the kingdom or empire in question. After the conquest, the invading tribes or tribal groups became the ruling classes by supplanting and destroying, often root and branch, the vanquished ruling and feudal classes. The victorious chief would then become the king or sultan of the new kingdom/empire, while the lesser tribal chiefs, leaders, and veterans

and the relatives, supporters and followers of these chiefs would become the officers, administrators, soldiers and commanders of the new kingdom or empire, receiving big or small fiefs and other benefits and emoluments as rewards for their military exploits and services to their chief, now turned king, or they became governors of the provinces or commanders of the armies of the new kingdom or empire. Thus the former nomads and tribesmen would now turn into feudal lords and grandees, ruling large territories and possessing vast lands. Full of energy and initiative, enterprise and resolution, they would now apply these talents not only for further conquests and wars, but also for the works of peace and development of their government, on the one side, and of their fiefs and estates, on the other. By their strong administration and good government, they would restore peace and order in the decadent and strife-torn country, develop its irrigational system, and improve its agriculture, by digging canals, building dykes and water-channels, etc., which had been neglected by the former rulers and fief-holders during the past two or three generations. In this way they fostered the growth of trade and commerce throughout the length and breadth of their kingdom/empire, which had fallen into decay during the time of troubles of the previous regime. Thus peace and prosperity would begin to reign over the troubled land once again, while the new ruling and feudal classes would amass untold wealth and vast riches. They would build mansions and palaces for themselves and fill them with innumerable slaves and servants, wives and concubines of all types and races on ever-increasing scales. Thus while their arms won victories far and wide, their homes were filled with all kinds of luxuries and pleasures which they had obtained by capture and loot, or by taxes, and feudal exactions.

These halcyon days of peace and prosperity, victory and wealth continued. on increasing scales, during the second generation of the ruling and feudal classes. Being the children of the conquering generation and, therefore, by intimate association, training and experience of their fathers and preceptors, the second generation was endowed with the same or similar qualities of courage, enterprise, initiative and energy as had the previous one. So the men of the second generation continued to win more victories on the battlefields, while they continued to consolidate and develop the works of peace and prosperity, of good government and administration as well as of their fiefs and farms, and fostered the growth and development of trade and commerce still further. This period was, indeed, the golden age of the Sisyphean dynasty, when the power and riches of the ruling and feudal classes were at the pinnacle of glory and prosperity. But the seeds of decay and degeneration were already sown with the birth of their children, the third generation.

Degenerative Role of the Islamic Family System: As we have explained above, the forces of degeneration lay in the family and social system of the Medieval Islam, or to put it concretely, (*i*) in the unbridled polygamous and concubinal harim system, (*ii*) the ousting of the free-born Muslim women of the first generation by the slave-girls and concubines during the period of the subsequent generations, and (*iii*) in the uneconomic Shari'a laws of inheritance and divorce by the husbands.

The family-based degenerative process began with the free-born women of the first generation, who were then deprived of their freedom and position of respect and dignity which they had enjoyed in their pre-Sisyphean nomadic life and society. They came with their fathers, hasbands and other relatives of their family and tribal groups, when they were invading and conquering the decadent Muslim kingdom or empire. But after the victory of their menfolk, they were segregated and incarcerated in the four-walls of the harim and the veil by their kinsmen and husbands, who belonged now to the ruling feudal classes of the first generation. The Purdah and harim restrictions were further tightened during the second generation of their rule and aggrandisement, in the golden age of peace and prosperity when they had acquired great fiefs and riches. Indeed, the richer and more powerful and influential a man became, either as a ruler, a governor or a fief-holder, the greater the number of wives and concubines, acquired or purchased, he had, and the stricter was their incarceration in the four-walls of the harim and Purdah. His suspicion and distrust of his neighbours and rivals was ever greater as the number of the inmates of his harim was larger. Hence the need for strict segregation and incarceration of them, whether they were free-born Muslim women or servile concubines. The Purdah ideology of Medieval Islam, based on the deep-seated male jealousy and suspiciousness, affected the whole Islamic social and civic life, as indicated by the public aloofness of their houses and dwelling-places. A modern historian of the medieval Islamic society and culture, G. von Grunebaum, writes:

"The Muslim house is oriented away from the street; it receives its light from an inner court, and the complex of its constituent buildings is so arranged as to secure a maximum of privacy to its inhabitants. This desire for privacy, which is the outgrowth of the social mores demanding as complete a withdrawal from the public as possible of the women of the family, inspires the insistence that windows and roofs must be constructed in such a way as to prevent anyone's intruding unseen into the intimacy of his neighbours' lives. For the same reason, house doors on opposite sides of a

street may not face each other".[1]

The social status and personal position of the free-born Muslim women in the Muslim households was gradually but inexorably degraded by the Ulema-ordained system of marriage and family relations and laws of inheritance of Medieval Islam. No doubt, the number of the free-born wives was restricted to the canonical four. But it could be and was frequently augmented by means of quick divorces which the Ulema had allowed the Muslim husbands to pronounce at any time and place for any reason, rather for no reason whatever. Moreover, their, position was further depressed by the Ulema denying the Muslim women the right to divorce their unwanted husbands by means of *khula*, i.e. the divorce initiated and pronounced by the wife. These changes reduced the social position of the Muslim women to that of chattels or possessions of their husbands and through them, of their family and kinship groups. At the same time, there began another phase of their degradation as they had to compete for the favours of their husbands against the ever-increasing crowd of slave-girls and concubines, brought into the homes and houses, mansions and palaces of the ruling and feudal classes by capture on the battlefields or by purchases in the slave-markets. These slave-girls and concubines, by their charms and wiles, both natural and acquired by their hard and bitter life-experiences, readily won over their free-born rivals a pride of place in the hearts and hearths of their masters. Thereby, they further depressed the already very depressed and degraded position of the free-born wives, who were now increasingly ousted from the family life of the Muslims by the servile crowd. On the other hand, the position of the concubines in the Muslim family life was further enhanced by the Ulema-ordained injunctions of the Islamic *fiqh* and *shari'a* that the children born of a concubine, the *umm al-walad*, had equal rights in the property of their "father" as had the children of the free-born and duly-married mothers.

Besides other evil consequences, these injunctions of the Shari'a led to the uneconomic fragmentation of the family property and lands, as they were apportioned into tiny pieces among the innumerable heirs, born of the free and servile mothers and, thus hindered the growth of the feudal economy in Medieval Islam.

These were the provisions and injunctions of the Islamic Law and Jurispendence, *Sharia* and *Fiqh*, as interpreted and ordained by the medieval Ulema of all Muslim sects, Sunni or Shia, orthodox or extremist. They proved to be most disastrous for the social role and

1. Gustave von Grunebaum, *Islam, Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition*, p. 148. London. 1964.

viability of the Muslim family life and relations in the economy, social continuity and survival of the Muslim peoples and states. These effects usually became visible during the third generation of the Sisyphean cycles, when they began to affect the whole economy, society and state-structure of the Islamic kingdom/empire, founded only a couple of generations ago. First of all, they undermined the social health and vigour of the family relations. They degraded the Muslim women so much that they became mere chattels or possessions of their husbands or masters. They brought so many slave-girls or concubines into the family that the free born and duly married wives and mothers were wholly or partially ousted from the family life. The result was that the third generation consisted almost wholly of the children of the concunines. They had no knowledge or interest in the family position and traditions of their elite groups and classes, nor did they possess the qualities and talents of their forefathers, the "founding fathers" of the first generation[1]. This was the achievement gap between the first or second and third generations of the Sisyphean cycle, which was as much moral in nature as it was demographical and social. It opened the floodgates of decadence and downfall of the Sisyphean kingdom or empire. Moreover, these provisions of the *Shari'a* engendered and increased tensions and quarrels among the several wives and concubines of the feudal and other elite families which were passed on to their children, especially over the questions of inheritance and division of the properties and lands.[2] They were not only fragmented into uneconomic units, but also neglected by their incompetent inheritors, who possessed no qualities and talents of their "founding fathers", who had built up these fiefs and lands and other properties only a couple of generations ago. Thus the *Shari'a* laws of marriage, divorce and inheritance completely undermined the feudal economy and turned vast estates and lands of the feudal elites into waste-lands or *mawat*. At the same time, they also undermined the state-structure, for the medeival Muslims could never evolve such laws of succession to the throne as to prevent the wars of succession among the sons, brothers, nephews and other relatives of a king or sultan after his death. The reason was that the Muslim

1. A poet, al-Mubarrad, (of the decadent priod of the Abbaside Caliphate, died 898 A.D.) bemoaned over the immense number of the children of the concubines in his days thus.

Sons of concubines have become
So numerous amongst us;
Lead me, O God: to a land
Where I shall see no bastards.

(Quoted by P. K. Hitti. *A History of Arabs*, p. 333)

2. *Cf.* Noel J. Coulson, *Conflicts and Tensions in Isamic Jurisprudence*, p. 9. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 1969.

rulers regarded the kingdom as the family property, preferably to be equally inherited by his children and other family members. The wars of succession, however, destroyed the unity and stability of the kingdom and thus contributed directly to its destruction during the fourth generation. At this stage, another factor, the kinship relations, also began to play their disintegrative role in Muslim life and society.

Kinship Society of Medieval Islam and the Sisyphean Phenomenon: Owing to the social regression under the Umayyads and the Abbasides, Medieval Islamic society became a divided society. It was indeed, doubly divided, horizontally, into classes of the rulers and the ruled, the rich and the poor and vertically, into innumer able kinship groups of tribes, clans, local and trade brotherhood associations, called *isnaf* or guilds. The upper classes were the ruling and feudal elite groups at the top, the descendants of the Sisyphean conquering tribes and groups, as well as the commercial classes in the towns and cities, who depended on the protection and patronage of the ruling and feudal classes, while the subject classes consisted of the vanquished peoples and groups among the peasantry and the former ruling and feudal groups, now dispossessed of their possessions and power by their victors. But, in spite of the fact that they were exploiters and exploited, the upper and lower classes were not classes in the modern sense of the term. They were divided into innumerable kinship groups, big and small, which were the real social, economic, cultural, political and even religious units of work, and wealth, *i.e.*, of property interests, property relations and possessions, and even had their peculiar religious beliefs and soical customs and traditions. In other words, each group, belonging whether to the upper or lower classes, consisted of rich and poor members, who were tied together by their group interests, loyalty and solidarity. Hence class relations were subordinate to kinship relations and interests, kinship loyalty and solidarity. This was the reason why a poor member defended his group's interests and solidarity as actively as did a richer member, as for example in a tribe, or in a trade brotherhood. Although property was owned by individual family, it was shared to a lesser or greater extent by the non-family members of the kin group in many ways, such as gifts and presents at certain group ceremonies and rites and rituals, connected with such occasions as the birth, marriage and death and other *rites de passage* of the members of the group or were given outright due to ties of blood and birth, called *silahi rahmi*. All these relations and ties were considered as superior and predominant over class relations. That was the reason why lands and fiefs in the villages and countryside, pastures and grass-lands in the arid and semi-arid deserts and valleys, and the shops and houses, etc., in the *mohallas* or quarters in the towns and cities, were divided among

these kin-groups, each one of these groups living seperately, without intermarrying, even without inter-dining with other groups. Intermarriage among these kin groups was not at all possible only by except capture of women by raids and wars. There was little or no cooperation between the various kin groups. Instead of it, they were intensely hostile and enemical towards each other. They looked at each other with deep-seated feelings of distrust and suspicion, and were kept together only by the fear and domination of the ruling groups of the Sisyphean State.

These kin groups were really sex-groups, based on the possession of women by men, by their patriarchal domination over women. Each group, therefore, consisted of a number of patriarchal family groups, headed by the father or grandfather, who had a harim of wives and innumerable concubines and their children and other dependents and relatives. Among the feudal and ruling elites, the heads of the families were landlords or fief-holders, officers and administrators or held some other rank or position in the Sisyphean government, while among the commercial classes they were traders, merchants and shopkeepers, etc., who, however, depended for their incomes and wellbeing on the protection and patronage of the feudal and ruling classes. Similarly, the kinship groups existed among, the non-ruling classes, like the peasants, craftsmen and other unprivileged sections of the society. These groups were, however, oppressed and exploited by the Sisyphean rulers and fief-holders by means of taxes, tolls, feudal dues and exactions, whose amount and extortion increased from generation to generation. It was partly due to the extravagant luxuries and pleasures of the ruling and feudal classes which increased as one generation succeeded another, but mainly because these classes kept ever larger harim of wives and concubines and other dependents and retainers, such as slaves, freedmen and eunuchs and also the ever-increasing number of their children due to palygamy and concubinage, while, at the same time, the produce and income from their fiefs and lands declined due to the family feuds as well as negligence of these decadent and degenerate classes.

Confronted with this darkening situation, the third generation of the ruling and feudal classes, among whom the tribal instincts of plunder and violence were still endemic, resorted more and more to the highhanded methods of exploitation of the lower agrarian classes as well as the oppressive taxation and outright extortion of the rich commercial classes. These acts of oppression proved to be the turning point in the history of the Sisyphean cycle, for they led to revolts and rebellions, headed by such groups and sections as had been dispossessed of their lands and properties, now allotted or conferred on the freedmen and slaves

of the decadent rulers, or by the leaders and chiefs of the powerful but non-ruling kinship groups and tribes. This state of affairs was called *Tawaif al-Muluki*, the anarchy or revolts of the leaders of the groups or tribes, in the various parts and provinces of the disintegrating kingdom or empire. It was during such a time of troubles or *fitna* that the fourth generation was born.

The fourth generation of the elite classes was thoroughly degenerate and effete. It consisted, almost wholly, of men, who were the children of the concubines and slave-girls. And they too filled their harims with more of them. In fact, they employed slaves and freedmen as their soldiers, officials, governors and commanders, while they abandoned themselves to a life of unmitigated luxury and lethargy, utterly neglecting the business of the state as well as of their fiefs and estates. They were now social parasites or rich drones. While their numbers multiplied very fast due to unbridled polygamy and concubinage, they undermined the administrative and financial stability of the State as well as of their feudal estates by oppressive tolls and taxes and even by predatory seizure of lands and properties of their rich subjects and poor peasants. Thus they utterly ruined the finances of the State and the economy of the fiefs and farms. The result was that, in spite of increasing taxes and feudal exactions, the revenues of the ruling classes declined and the state-treasury became empty. Naturally, in such conditions, the soldiers and commanders as well as the officials and other functionaries of the State did not receive their salaries and other emoluments for years on end and therefore resorted to all sorts of lawless practices and loot. At the same time, the farms and fiefs were ruined by the neglect and oppressive exactions of the licentious and depraved progeny of the feudal elites, which further increased the poverty and misery of the peasant masses. In this state of political and feudal anarchy, corruption became rampant and the lawless soldiery, the feudal nobility, let loose a veritable reign of terror and loot all over the decadent kingdom or empire, while revolts and rebellions, led by the various leaders of the tribal and other kinship groups, or by the old and new advanturers from abroad, arose all over the moribund state. Indeed, it was now plunging headlong towards a fall.

The End of a Sisyphean Cycle. Amidst these conditions of anarchy, disintegration and confusion would appear new nomadic tribal groups on the borders of the moribund kingdom/empire. They would have had, perhaps, already sharpened their teeth by occupying some of its outlying districts or some neighbouring kingdom on its borders. They were be the new Sisyphean invaders. Sooner or latter, they inflicted a defeat

or two on the degenerate rulers and their equally worthless troops and would then capture the capital and overrun vast territories of the doomed kingdom/empire. They would then kill and exterminate the degenerate elite classes, ruling and feudal, while they would distribute their lands, riches, mansions and palaces, including the harims or the wives, concubines, mothers and daughters of the vanquished elites among their own chiefs, warriors, relatives, supporters and kinsmen. Thus, in a short span of time, a new king or sultan, with new feudal and ruling classes, would come to power all over the old kingdom or empire. This was how a new nomadic-feudal kingdom or empire came into being. Then would begin a new Sisyphean cycle in the history of Medieval Islam. However, the new ruling and feudal elite classes had already injected the virus of degeneracy and decay into their body politic by capturing and distributing among themselves the harims or women of their vanquished enemies and by adopting the ways of their harim life. Thus the beginning of a new Sisyphean cycle was also the beginning of its end, which would inevitably come in the course of about four generations.* So the harim system, along with the slavery of men and women, was the Pandora's box of all evils that befell Medieval Islamic state and society over and over again in the endless cycles of their rise, decay and fall.

Historical Consequences of the Nomadic-Feudal Cycles : Nothing that happens with a clock-like regularity would be without lasting and ineffaceable effects on the society and history of the

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*The four generation cycle really indicates a cycle of moral and social degeneracy rather than a strictly chronological order of dynastic succession. There were, of course, some Sisyphean cycles which lasted much shorter than four generations. Some Muslim kingdom or empires lasted for two or three generations, e.g. the Mamluk dynasties of Egypt, the Slave (1206-90) Khilji, (1290-1320), Sayid (1414-1451) Lodhi (1451-1526) and Suri (1540-55) dynasties in the South Asian sub-continent, the Murabitun dynasty (1090-1145) in Muslim Spain. On the other hand, there were cases in which the nomadic-feudal cycle lasted for more than four generations, e. g., the Mughal Empire (1526-1804) in the South Asian sub-continent and the Ottoman Empire (1250-1924) in the Near East. The speedy end of a Sisyphean cycle was always due to the socio-historical isolation of the ruling dynasty and of its elite groups, in which the degenerative and disintegrative forces proved to be more deleterious and fatal. On the other hand, the prolongation of a Sisyphean cycle was always due to the influx of new elite groups and adventurers from the birthlands of the original conquering tribes and from other Muslim lands, who were always welcome to the ruling and feudai elites and their kinship groups and classes. These newcomers infused a new spurt of enegry and greater achievement capabilities into the body politics of the decadent kingdom/empire and thus gave it a new lease of life. But after a generation or so these groups also became equally degenerate, which after they also became sources of separatism and disintegration, which then resulted in the rapid decline and fall of the moribund state.

peoples concerned and on their civilisation and culture. This was also true of the effects of the Sisyphean cycles on Medieval Islam.

Intellectual Decadence and Obscurantism in Medieval Islam : The opening period of the Sisyphean era of Medieval Islam gave a fillip to the intellectual energies and achievement capabilities of the Medieval Muslims. During the tenth and eleventh centuries, when the Abbaside Caliphate lay moribund and disintegrated, two Sisyphean cycles occurred all over the Islamic World. They were the Buwayhid and Seljuqid cycles in Iraq, Persia and other central provinces of the Caliphate, the Ghaznavid and Ghorid cycles in the eastern regions of the Dar-al-Islam, and the Murabitun and the Muwahhidun cycles in the Mugharib and Muslim Spain. During these cycles, all over the Islamic World, the great and brilliant achievements of the Abbaside period in science, philosophy and learning were continued. In fact, there was a revival or renaissance of Persian language, poetry and literature as well as in science and philosophy in the lands of the Ghaznavid and Seljuqid rulers, just as there was a renaissance of the Arabic language, poetry and literature, as well as of science and philosophy in the contemporary Murabitun and Muwahhidun Spain. But these achievements were really the last flickers of a dying flame, for Medieval Islam never reached the same heights in science, philosophy and literature ever afterwards. The Sisyphean ages of the Mongols, the Tatars, the Turcomans, and of all other nomadic invaders and conquerors of Medieval Islam down to the modern times did not produce a single scientist, thinker or philosopher worth the name, with the solitary exception of Ibn Khaldun (see the Appendix at the end of this chapter), although there were legions of theological and secular writers, scholars divines and sufis and other men of learning, the so-called Ulema, in all the Sisyphean kidgdoms and empires of Medieval Islam. None of them produced anything new, original and creative. In fact, the mind and intellect of the medieval Muslims remained absolutely barren of all scientific and philosophical thought and achievement ever after. They merely repeated what was written or said by the great thinkers and writers of the Abbaside period. *Taqlid* or blind repetition, as they themselves claimed, was the height of their mental powers and intellectual achievements while science or free reason became anathema to them, as it is even today, when the Western science, philosophy and learning have overwhelmed the Islamic world from end to end. The intellectual poverty of the Muslim mind was also due to the economic and political consequences of the Sisyphean phenomenon.

Economic Consequences : Decadent and Unprogressive Feudalism : Economic consequences of the Sisyphean cycles were equally,

if not more, disastrous for the Islamic society, culture and civilisation of the Middle Ages. Though *Iqta* feudalism, as evolved under the Seljuqids and still more so under the Ottoman Sultans and the Mughal Emperors, in which fief-holding was more firmly linked with the military service than in the Qati'a feudalism of the Umayyads and Abbasides, yet this development did not introduce the necessary element of politico-military determination to defend the fiefs and such other grants against the whims and caprices of the autocratic overlord, whether he was a sultan or an emperor or a kinglet of a petty principality. Consequently even this kind of feudalism could not break through or away from the kinship property relations in which it was embedded.

Comparison with the progressive feudalism of Europe : Feudalism was a two-tiered social system, that is, the politico-military system of domination at the top and the socio-economic system of exploitation below. The two tiers were closely inter-linked and interdependent: one could not be developed or changed without changing the other. However, they evolved by stages. The first and the initial stage was necessarily one of military conquest. It led to the subjugation of the peasantry and the defeated gentry and nobility, the former feudal classes, of the vanquished people by a nomadic tribe or tribes or by an invading group from outside, which became the new feudal nobility or class. It was the predatory and tribalistic stage. Kinship property relations prevailed among the new feudal class, for it was still tribalistic in its organisation of clans and tribes, with tribalistic or communal property relations and interests. The conquered lands were held in common by the conquering tribes, clans and families. It was, therefore, a feudalism without fiefs. It was, a tribal or clan feudalism. It was what happened in the Early Islam, as we have said above, and also happened in the Germanic, Slavic and Gothic Europe almost during the same centuries, though without any religious overtones. The next stage began with family ownership of the feudal estates. They were carved out of the communally-owned lands of the dominant tribes and clans, whose pre-Sisyphean solidarity and unity were weakened by the growth of new economic interests and relations, based on the exclusive family ownership and possession. In other words, the family group with its exclusive property ownership and relations began to replace the communal ownership of the earlier stage. This was the beginning of the family estates or fiefs, which were regarded as the property of the head of the family group, and not of the tribe or clan that had originally conquered these lands.

It was, however, a critical stage, for it involved a change in the family system, if its system of marriage ties and relations were to be disembedded from the kinship relations of the wider tribal or clan

group. This change could be effected by instituting monogamy as the only form of marriage for all people, high or low, rich or poor, and by restricting the rights of inheritance to the sons of the head of the family, and better still, to his eldest son under a law of primogeniture. Such changes would have introduced elements of responsibilty and efficiency in the politico-military activities of the feudal warrior classes. By means of these changes in the family structure, the family holdings or lands could be handed down as compact units from generation to generation and also militarily defended by the succeeding heirs, as feudal warriors, against rival nobles, warriors and marauders, far and near. They would have also exercised a restraint on the powers of the overlord, the king or the like, to allot or confer the fiefs to others capriciously or arbitrarily, especially among his favourites, and others. Moreover, they would have also gradually eliminated slavery from the social life of the monogamous people, for the slaves, both male and female, could have no place or function to fulfil in the monogamous family and in its restricted inheritance system. Finally the monogamous family system and the law of primogeniture would have also produced a salutary political effect, inasmuch as the succession to the throne would come to be restricted to the eldest son of the deceased king or ruler. This was what happened in European monarchies at the end of the Middle Ages. It put to an end all political disturbances and struggles among the sons and heirs of the throne, while they continued to be so common and so disastrous among the Muslim dynasties down to the recent times. This regularised dynastic succession created so stable conditions of public peace and order, good government and efficient administration in the feudal states of the later Middle Ages in Europe as to lead to the continuous development and progress of their society and economy. It transformed them into national states, something which was absolutely unattainable in the Sisyphean Islamic world.

The absence of these changes in the family system was the bane of the Islamic feudalism, both at the tribalistic and the *iqta* stages of its evolution, which foreclosed all chances of its further development. On the contrary, their absence got the Islamic feudal society bogged down in the endless Sisyphean cycles of degeneration and decadence. These were the reasons why Islamic feudalism never reached the third stage in the evolution of the feudal society, namely a more systematic exploitation of the labour power of the peasants or serfs, the socio-economic tier of the feudal society. Such a system of exploitation required, as a pre-condition, new concepts of property and possession.

The Role of Monogamy in the evolution of the Feudal Society. After the tribalistic stage, further evolution of the feudal society

hinged on the changes in the property relations, that is, on the more definitive concept of possession. On the question of property or possession, feudal society was confronted with a number of contradictions, and its further evolution depended on how they were resolved. Originally, at the stage of tribal feudalism, possession did not mean possession of lands or estates but greater or lesser allocation of the produce or revenues of the communally owned lands. It meant, in other words, the right to take certain fixed share of their produce. But the differences in the shares allocated led to disputes and struggle between the various feudal warriors or their kin groups. They were, therefore, more inclined to fight among themselves rather than to wage war against the outsiders or foregin enemies, and this resulted in the Tawaif al-Muluki or the wars of the party or group leaders.

There was yet another contradiction. Does possession also mean possession of women ? Are women to be regarded as the possession of men? Now they were, in fact, regarded as men's possessions in the patriarchal kinship society in which feudalism arose, the tribalistic stage of its evolution. Only by de-tribalising or by eliminating kinship relations from social life that the status of women as the possessions of their fathers, husbands, brothers or kinsmen could be changed. And this change would begin only with the change in the family structure, by instituting strict monogamy for all classes, rich or poor, high ar low, *i. e.*, by complete and universal abolition of polygamy, including, especially, servile concubinage, and, therefore, by implication, the abolition of slavery. With these changes women became the equal partners in the monogamous family structure, and could not be treated by the warlike men as objects of capture by raid or war or of purchase on the slave-market. Now such a transformation of women's place and role in the family life and society never occurred in Medieval Islam, because polygamy and servile concubinage were declared by the Ulema to be Islamic injunctions, while it did take place in the medieval European societey during the 8th to 10th centuries, which paved the way to the further evolution of its feudalism. First of all, it came to imply that "feudal possession" meant only lands or fiefs, castles and other feudal accoutrements, but never women. Hence their capture by raid or war or their purchase as slave-girls was never the aim of the wars and raids of the European feudal classes. Moreover, the monogamous family structure integrated the interests of both the husband and wife so as to preserve and continue their common family interests, such as their family property or possessions, occupation and profession, their family social status and of their children after them. Thus the monogamous family system made the husband

and wife equal partners in the total life of the present and of the future of the family which necessarily led to the adoption of the laws which restricted the rights of inheritance to their children or sons.

The Role of War in the evolution of Monogamous and Polygamous Feudal Societies. Feudal society was primarily and basically organised for war in order to protect feudal possessions. Indeed, it was a matter of honour or *izzat* for a feudal warrior to defend them against all enemies and all kinds of challenges and threats. But the role of war in the evolution of a feudal society depended on whether it was monogamous or polygamous. To put the differences briefly, in the monogamous feudalism war played a dynamic, constructive and integrative role, while in the polygamous one its role was destructive, predatory and disintegrative. These differnces were due to the fact that warfare in the polygamous feudalism could not be de-linked trom kinship relations and was, therefore, an instrument of achieving tribal or caste interests and aims, whereas in the monogamous feudal society it became more and more de-tribalised, for it became an instrument of feudal class purposes and composition. So the establishment of monogamous family and inheritance system made warfare the most effective and dynamic force in the evolution and transformation of the feudal society. Warfare became a matter of intensely personal "honour" for each and every member of the feudal classes,—a matter of upholding and defending their personal status as feudal warriors, belonging to a class of warriors, ever ready to meet any challenge or threat to their personal or class status and to all that it stood for. In fact, the more resolute, the more active, the more energetic and the more devoted a feudal warrior was to his profession of arms, the more honour and the greater influence he enjoyed among his warrior class and the more firmly he could hold his lands or fiefs, even acquire still more of them, and transmit them to his sons or to his eldest son, where the law of primogeniture prevailed. In such a warlike environment, there was, indeed, no place or possibility for a degenerate progency, for each generation was prepared and trained for war in the monogamous family life as well as in a social milieu which was supercharged with warlike spirit and struggle for maintaining feudal honour, family status and property from generation to generation.

Such a warlike mode of life and its highly-valued concept of "honour" was a very good example of what is nowadays called "class consciousness", devoted totally and exclusively to warfare both as a personal profession and as a basis of class relations, class status and symbol, *i. e.*, as a means and method of maintaining their class position as fief-holders in the feudal relations of production.

It meant readiness to fight for feudal 'honour' and all it stood for, from feudal customs and ways to knight errantry. Of course, there have been, in human history, many warrior classes and peoples, devoted wholly and exclusively to warfare as their life-long profession, as for example, the medieval Muslim feudal classes, who were, at least during the first two generations of a Sisyphean cycle, equally pugnacious and devoted warriors, as the crusading English king, Richard the Lion-Hearted, found to his surprise, thanks to the brief Kurdish Sisphean cycle of the Ayyubi dynasty. But there have been no warrior class or people in human history except in the medieval European feudal society which produced warrior classes from generation to generation for a thousand years till it was itself transformed by constant warfare into a new kind of society in which feudalism ceased to have any place or role to play. In short, the European feudal classes lived by war and for war from generation to generation. Sustained by the monogamous family and social system, always producing new generations of feudal warriors, this kind of feudal society produced the most warlike "class consciousness" which never declined or became clouded by any other interests or inclination except war. In course of time, it brought about such social transformations as culminated in the fifteenth century in the complete abolition of feudalism. These transformations began thus: the more resolutely devoted and fierce warriors the feudal classes became, the greater and more stable conditions of peace and order they created in and around their fiefs and estates, the more throughly were their serfs and peasants exploited and the more productive they became, and, therefore, the more prosperous and richer the feudal nobility as a class became. These conditions of peace and prosperity led to the growth and development of trade and commerce and to the rise of market towns and cities, where the surplus produce of the feudal villages was sold and from where the increasingly rich feudal classes could purchase materials of warfare as well as such necessaries and luxuries to which they became increasingly accustomed. Thus these warlike classes became closely tied to the maket economy of the newly-emergent towns and cities, where a new class of urban-dwelling traders, merchants, artisans and craftsmen came into being due to the ever-increasing demands of the feudal classes for urban goods and luxuries. At the same time, feudal oppression and exploitation made increasing numbers of serfs and villagers to escape to these flourishing towns and cities, where they became labourers, artisans and craftsmen. Thus the number and prosperity of the urban classes and communities increased constantly as the feudal classes devoted themselves more and more to wars as well as to the greater exploitation of their village communities.

But then the feudal classes also began to change. As their fiefs prospered and their produce increased, some members of the feudal classes began to devote more attention to greater agricultural production by better organisation of serf-labour and by improving the tools and techiques of agricultural production. At first, this was done by the agents and representatives of a feudal lord, such as his bailiff or steward and other functionaries, for he was still more interested in war than in agriculture. Nevertheless, the introduction of these changes transformed the feudal estates into manors, where the serf-labour was more systematically organised and exploited.

With the manorial system began the fourth stage in the evolution of the Western European feudalism. It signified a radical change in the structure of the feudal society. Firstly, a manor was a privately owned fief, for which its feudal owner depended neither on the support and assistance of his kinship or family group, nor on his feudal overlord. It was his hereditary property, recognised by the customs and laws of the feudal society and state. It was inherited by him from his father, though with the usual feudal ceremonies and routines of homage, etc., to his overlord. And, in course of time, he transferred it to his sons or son and not to any other feudal lord, as it was formerly the privilege of his overlord to do so and, theoretically, he could still do it. But such a non-hereditary transfer became rare with the growth of manorialism. It implied, therefore, that this kind of feudalism had, at long last, broken through the centuries-old cobwebs of kinship relations of production So the Western European feudal society, during the 12th to 14th centuries, was the first society in world history to become a non-kinship society, that is, a de-tribalised and de-castefied society, pregnant with still greater historical transformations to come. In other words, the feudal fief-holder, or the lord of the manor, as he was now called, became really a landlord, interested less in warfare but more in agriculture and in the development of his manorial production.

With these developments began the fifth and the last stage in the evolution of the Western European feudalism. Now the feudal landlords or the lords of the manors, themselves became interested in increasing the agricultural production of their manors or farms by applying better and more efficient tools and techniques of production, such as better agricultural implements, like the use of heavy ploughs, the substitution of the horse for oxen as draught animals, the rotation of crops, etc. They were now interested in greater production in order to make more money or profits, by selling their produce in the market towns and cities, where the urban burgess classes were fast developing their trade and commercial activities far and wide in the country and abroad. In this

way the feudal classes, or at least, a substantial number of them, took to capitalistic exploitation of their lands and farms, in which, at this stage, the free labour of the farmers and tenants replaced the unfree and forcible labour of the serfs. However, these developments put an end to feudalism as a social order, and gave rise to a new society based on agricultural capitalism in the villages or countryside and on mercantile capitalism of the emergent bourgeoisie in the towns and cities and on the national state system in the country as a whole. This transformation first took place in England, Netherlands and other West European countries during the 15th century. With these developments, however, Europe left the Medieval Dar al-Islam, still in the throes of the Sisyphean cycles, several centuries behind.

The absence of these developments in the Medieval Islamic world was only the negative aspect of its Sisyphean-stricken society. It produced more positive results also which proved to be far more disastrous for the historical viability and survival of the medieval Islamic society, civilisation aud culture. Let us now consider them.

March of the Desert in Medieval Islam. The endless recurrence of the Sisyphean cycles in Medieval Islam transformed its agricultural geography and demography. During the third generation of a Sisyphean cycle, when social degeneration of the feudal classes and the political break-up of the kingdom/empire began, vast areas of the Sown, brought under the plough by the enterprising elites of the earlier generations, again turned into waste-lands significantly called the *mawat* or dead lands by the *fuqaha* or jurists of the Fiqh and Shari'a. They were left uncultivated and unproductive by the fourth generation and thus became desert areas. These mawat-lands and arid regions were only partially reclaimed and re-inhabited by the new feudal elites of the next Sisyphean cycle before they also began to degenerate and neglect them. So, with every new Sisyphean cycle, increasingly wider areas of the once cultivated Sown remained permanently uncultivated desert and arid regions, with the result that large numbers of villages, towns and cities, which once flourished there, were ruined and turned into desolate heaps of rubble, with its agriculture and industry destroyed, and its ancient arts and crafts forgotten and its populous districts depopulated. Such barren and depopulated regions became once again the abode of the few native-born nomadic tribes, who alone could subsist on its meagre resources. The first to become such permanently barren and desert areas were in Iraq, Syria, Kurasan, Khuzistan Mekran, and North Africa at the end of the Seljuqid and the Ayyubid Sisyphean cycles in the middle of the twelfth century. A century after the Mongol Sisyphean cycle left such a trail of devastation that vast regions

in Iraq, Khurasan, Khuzistan (South Persia), Kirman, Mekran, Syria and other heartlands of Early Islam became permanently desert lands and remained so down to the modern times. The result was that the peoples of these central Islamic lands, who had played so great a role in the history of Early and Medieval Islam then passed into the background of the later Islamic history. Henceforth, their place was taken by the new nomadic invaders and conquerors who conquered new lands and countries for Islam in the South Asian sub-continent, in the Transcaspian steppelands, in East Europe and in the vast sub-Saharan Africa. But each one of these post-Mongolian Sisyphean cycles in the newly Islamised lands also left a trail of unreclaimed mawat-lands in its turn, which went on increasing in area and aridity as more Sisyphean cycles, big or small, followed during the subsequent centuries.

At last came the nemesis of the Sisyhean ruinations. It was in the form of European Imperialisms. By the end of the seventeenth century, vast regions in the Eurasian steppelands between Crimea and the Caspian Sea, turned into unreclaimable desert lands during the decadent phases of the Ottoman Empire and Tatar Khanates, which enabled the emergent Russian Imperialism, always eager to be the first among the World Imperialisms, to conquer and colonise them. Next the fertile valleys and plains of Central Asia, twice heirs to the brilliant Islamic civilisation and culture, first in the pre-Mongol and then in the post-Mongol eras, turned into desert and barren areas due to the devastations caused by the Sisyphean cycles of the Turcoman Khanates and Uzbek Amirates, thereby again enabling the Russian Imperialists, eager to advance farther and farther into Asia, to invade and colonise them during the 18th and 19th centuries. At the same time, as the Mughal cycle in the South Asian sub-continent came to an end, it spread so much devastation and desolution in its vast provinces as to enable the British Imperialists to subdue them one by one during the 18th and 19th centuries. At the same time, British, French and other Western Imperialisms conquered the African and Arabian provinces of the Ottoman Empire in Western Asia and North Africa during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Thus ended the dismal story of the ever-degenerative and ever-disintegrative nomadic-feudal cycles of Medieval Islam.

Political Consequences: Permanent Rift between the Rulers and the Ruled in Medieval Islam. Every Sisyphean kingdom or empire in Medieval Islam was a political hybrid. It was composed of foreign conquerors, ruling over vast multitudes of vanquished peoples, with whom they had almost nothing in common, neither in race, nor language, nor culture, nor even religion. The ruling and feudal classes were mostly foreign-born invaders and conquerors speaking outlandish tongues, practising outlandish

customs and clad in equally outlandish costumes during at least the first two or three generations of their advent. And by the time they had become naturalised and acculturised to the native conditions, they became so degenerate as to fall easy victims to a new wave of Sisyphean invaders. Such a permanent rift between the rulers and the ruled produced political consequences of the utmost retrogressive and reactionary type. Firstly, all these Sisyphean States were born of violence and war and existed as long as they could by violence and oppression. That is the reason why their ruling and feudal classes could not develop any other kind of financial and economic relations except those of the most brutal forms of over-taxation and predatory exploitation of the native populations. Secondly, their state-structure always remained one of unrestricted autocracy and despotism. Thirdly, they could not evolve socio-political relations other than those of the bio-social kinship groups of tribes, clans, castes and the like. That is why these Sisyphean kingdoms and empires were fragile and brittle like a rope of sand, for they consisted only of innumerable kinship groups (tribes, clans, castes, local brotherhoods, family groups, etc.) which had nothing in common between them except the fear, force and terror of their Sisyphean masters. This was also the reason why the European Imperialists were able to conquer all the Muslim kingdoms and empires, big or small, from one end of the Islamic world to the other so easily and speedily. While the Sisyphean ruling and feudal classes were too degenerate to resist these Imperialist invaders, they were welcomed by the non-ruling and non-feudal kinship groups with open arms as their liberators. This was the moral and political inanity of the Medieval Islam.

They were themselves tied down by their own kind of kinship society, as Muslim peoples in Asia and Africa, but the Europeans were not, during the later Medieval Ages, hence came the Spanish *reconquista*, as the expulsion and extermination of the Spanish Muslims was called by the Christian historians.

The kinship structure of the Medieval Islam has also affected the social life and politics of Modern Islam. It explains the reason why the politico-geographical diamensions of Medieval Islam were much wider than those of the Modern Islamic World. Its kinship structure enabled the Sisyphean rulers to rule the non-Muslim peoples.

Under the Western imperialist domination, the Muslim peoples have lost the cultural hegemony they had acquired during the Sisyphean Middle Ages.

The wave of nationalism among the non-Muslim populations of the erstwhile Muslim kingdoms and empires has inspired

them in the modern times to break away from the Dar al-Islam and thereby to reduce the politico-geographical size of the present-day Islamic world. Even the Muslim majority countries and nations of today are not free from the "pockets" of non-Muslim populations in them, such as in Palestine, Lebanon, Cyprus, etc., They can be incited to revolt and independence by the present-day expansionist, imperialist and social imperialist powers for their own imperialist and expansionist designs and purposes.

APPENDIX

Ibn Khaldun (1348—1406) was the first Muslim historian to study the cyclical phenomenon in the Islamic history. He called it the cycle of four generations of 120 years duration. According to him, the demiurge of these historical cycles was the energy of the nomadic tribes, cemented by their tribal *asabiyah* or solidarity, based on their kinship bonds and prompted by the predatory impulses and hunger of these desert-dwellers, but effected through the supine helplessness of the effete civilistions and cultures of the settled political communities of the cities and kingdoms, who were unable to resist the onslaught of the nomadic invaders. These conquerors themselves became effete and degenerate in course of four generations due to the luxury and pleasures of their urban culture and civilisation and oppression and over-taxation by their decadent rulers, and thus they paved the path for new nomadic conquests.

Ibn Khaldun's theory is correct only in so far as the nomadic impulses were concerned. But his whole explanation is fatalistic and fallacious, steeped as it was in the prejudices and moralistic predilections of the Medieval Muslims, such as the bravery of the nomadic peoples, and the effiminacy and supineness of the settled urban communities and cultures. Hence his conclusions that the nomads would always win over the city-dwellers, and the Desert over the Sown, or that civilisation and culture were always decadent and demoralising forces. Ibn Khaldun did not believe that there could be urban civilisations and cultures which would always win over the nomadic and desert-dwelling tribes and peoples. The real explanation of the cyclical phenomena of Islamic history lay, as we have analysed above, in (*i*) the degenerative role of the polygamous and concubinal Purdah-bound family and harim system of the medieval Muslims, (*ii*) the non-economic *Sharia* laws of inheritance of the landed property of the feudal elite classes; and (*iii*) the disintegrative role of the kinship structure of the Muslim society of clans, tribes, and such other communal and local brotherhood groups.

CHAPTER 23

ABBASIDE CALIPHATE UNDER THE BUWAYHIDS AND THE SELJUQIDS

From Mutii to al-Mustazhir

945-1118 A. D./334-512 A. H.

Emergence of the Buwayhids. As we have already said, the Buwayhids originated in Daylam, a mountainous region in northern Persia. Daylam was aptly described as a land of lost causes. The Persian peasantry and the Turkish tribes, pressed by the advance of the Arabs, were inclined to follow any adventurer who would save them from the rulers of Baghdad. They welcomed an Alide who founded an ephemeral dynasty. Abu Shuja Buwayh, a leader of a Daylami tribe, was in his employ and imbibed Shiaism from his Alide master. But he frequently changed sides in the war between the Alide ruler and the Samanids who annexed Daylam at last. Buwayh's three sons, adventurers all, left Daylam and moved south into Persia proper. There, in 934 A. D., they conquered Isfahan, Shiraz, which became their capital, Ahwaz and Kirman. Then they began to press upon Baghdad, then ruled by the weak Caliph Mustakfi. He conferred upon the eldest brother, Ahmad, the title of Muizz ud Daula, upon the second brother, Ali, that of Imad ud Daula and upon the third, named Hasan, Rukn ud Daula. But a mere title did not satisfy Muizz ud Daula, who advanced upon Baghdad and became its master in 945 A. D. Upon this the Turkish commanders who had dominated Baghdad for about a century, fled to Mosul and the Daylami officers and soldiers took their place. Thus began the Buwayhid dominance of Baghdad.

THE ERA OF BUWAYHID DOMINANCE : 945-1055

Nature of the Buwayhid interlude. The Buwayhids ruled Baghdad for a little more than a century. The Buwayhid era might well be called an interlude between the Turkish ascendency which preceded it and the Seljuqi dominance which followed. It differed from both in many respects. Firstly, being Persians, the Buwayhids revived Persian influences in Baghdad and elsewhere once more, with its usual consequences of the revival of the free-thinking philosophy of the Mutazila, the Persian literature, etc. Secondly, the Buwayhids were Shia and endeavoured hard

to make Shiaism the state-religion in their dominions, even in Baghdad which was prepominantly and zealously an Orthodox or Sunni city. This attempt led to a long-drawn struggle between the two factions of the Muslim peoples, which finally crystalized the two sects of Sunnism and Shiaism into permanent forms which they have retaind down to the present times. Thirdly, the era of the Buwayhid supremacy was the nadir of the Abbaside Caliphate. It sank to a position of abject dependence and subservience to their Buwayhid masters. They might have supplanted the Sunni Abbaside Caliph by a Shi'ite Alide Caliph but for the fear of provoking a violent reaction from those parts of the Islamic world where Sunnism was still predominant, and where the Abbasides were still accepted as spiritual heads of Islam. Fourthly, the Buwayhid era was the first to mark a clear split in the Islamic world into two distinct parts of the Turko-Persian East and the Arab-Berber West. The Buwayhid rule did not extend to the western provinces of the moribund Abbaside Caliphate, but was confined to Persia and Iraq. Buwayhids did not even make Baghdad their capital, but remained at Shiraz which was their capital at the time of their emergence. They appointed a governor to administer the erstwhile capital of the Abbasides, which now sank to the level of a provincial headquarters. This fact also illustrates the low position to which the Abbasides had sunk. Baghdad, however, remained a centre of science and learning, trade and culture, religion and philosophy, though not alone in the Islamic world. Several other cities rivalled and even excelled Baghdad as brilliant centres of learning, and economic prosperity, such as Cairo of the Fatimids, Cordova of the Umayyad Spain, Bukhara and Samarkand of the Samanids, Ghazni of the Ghaznavids and Shiraz of Buwayhids themselves. Fifthly, even in respect of Shiaism, the Buwayhids were not alone, but had rivals in the Hamadanids of Mosul and Aleppo and above all, in the Fatimids of Egypt, who disputed the Abbaside claim to caliphate. The Buwayhids were also surrounded by powerful Sunni rivals, namely, the Turkomans of Samanid Kingdom and the rising House of Ghaznah. Under Mahmud of Ghazni, the Ghaznavids won laurels for Islam in the lands beyond the Indus, to the great jubilations of the Sunni Caliph and populace of Baghdad. They interpreted his victories and conquests in the South Asian sub-continent as a justification for Sunnism, and a proof of its services to Islam.

Al-Mutii : 946-74: al-Taii : 974-91 : al-Qadir : 991-1031 : and al-Qaim : 1031-75. We may now briefly notice the four Abbaside Caliphs who "ruled" during the Buwayhid period. They played no role in the affairs of the Caliphate except as mere puppets of their Buwayhid masters and as spiritual figureheads to issue diplomas of investiture to any ruler who asked for them for

whatever worth they had. Their Buwayhid masters treated or tolerated them with contempt, carried them about as their camp-followers during their military campaigns against their many rivals, paid them a pension and installed and deposed them as they liked. Their nonentity explains also the reason why the "rule" of these Caliphs lasted so long, protected as they were by the temporal power and sovereignty of their Buwayhid masters. Soon after his entry into Baghdad, the Buwayhid ruler, Muizz ud Daula, deposed and blinded Mustakfi whom he suspected of conspiring with the Turkish commanders. In his place, he installed the obedient al-Mutii b'Illah, "the Obedient to the Lord." When, after a long reign, Mutii was struck with paralysis, he abdicated in favour of his equally obedient son, entitled at-Taii b'Illah, "the Obeyer of the Lord." His "reign" had no political significance whatever, for events took place without his choice and even knowledge. But during this time flourished many men of eminence in science and learning, as for instance Masudi, the historian, Farabi, the philosopher, Abu'l Qasim at-Tanukhi and ad-Dinawari, the rhetorician and others. At-Taii was, however, deposed in 991 by the Buwayhid ruler Baha-ud Daula who coveted his wealth. He was replaced by his brother with the title of al-Qadir b'Illah. Al-Qadir remained Caliph for forty years, during which occurred the well-known victories of Mahmud of Ghaznah which gave so much joy to the Caliph and his Sunni co-religionists in Baghdad. The Buwayhids were on the decline, which strengthened the Caliph's position and Sunnism vis-a-vis the Buwayhid Shiaism. The Caliph succeeded in appointing a Sunni jurist as a supreme judge while the Buwayhids were content with a Shia Naqib to adjudicate in Shia cases only. On al-Qadir's death in 1031, his son became the Caliph with the title of al-Qaim bi-amr-Illah. He also ruled for a long period of forty-four years, the last twenty of which were spent under the new masters, the Seljuq Turks. He was said to be a pious, charitable, just, devout and virtuous Caliph. But his period witnessed increasing quarrels between the Sunnis and Shias.

The Buwayhid Sultans or Maliks. When Mustakfi welcomed the Buwayhid invader, Ahmad Muizz ud Daula, he conferred on him the titles of Ameer ul Umra and Sultan, symbolizing his temporal authority. The Buwayhids, however, preferred to style themselves as Ameers or Maliks. Nevertheless they were far more powerful than the Ameer ul Umra before them. Muizz ud Daula forced the Caliph to inscribe his name on the Caliphal coins and to mention it along with the Caliph's in the Khutba at Friday prayers—something which was never done before. It was, however, illustrative of the extremely humiliated and subservient position the Caliph occupied in the political structure of the "Abbaside" Caliphate. Thus a Shi'ite Sultan became the head of the Muslim

State, while the Caliph retained nothing but the name of his high position. The position of Muizz ud Daula, writes Ameer Ali, "was like that of Charles Martel under the Merovingian kings of France, for he was the virtual sovereign, whilst the Caliph was merely his dependent, receiving a daily allowance of 5000 dinars from the public treasury."

Muizz's Shia Policy and the permanent formation of Shia and Sunni Sects. The advent of the Shi'ite Buwayhids into Baghdad had far-reaching effects on the religion of Islam. Almost from the very day it was founded, Baghdad had been a predominantly Arab city and in course of time also became a predominantly Sunni city owing to the Arab-Persian rivalry. Soon after his entry into the old capital, Muizz ud Daula adopted an active policy of Shia-ization of the city. He compelled its people to commemorate the Shia festivals, *e. g.*, the mourning on the 10th of Muharram, the anniversary of the death of Imam Husayn, or the rejoicing on the day of Ghadir al-Khumm, when, according to the Shias, the Holy Prophet (Sm) had declared Hazrat Ali as the "maula". All shops in the city were to be closed on such occasions. He even went a step further and ordered his Daylami followers, who were also all Shias, to write on the door and walls of every mosque in the city insults and curses upcn Muawiya and "the doers of wrong against the family of the Prophet of Allah"—a thin reference to the first three Caliphs. In consequence of this policy, fanaticism in the city was fanned and thus clashes and quarrels between the Shias and Sunnis became frequent. Though originally these dispute and dissensions were due to economic, linguistic and geographical reasons, they now assumed fixed and permanent shape of religious and theological dogmas and rituals because they were now fought with the pens and tongues of the theologians, jurists, writers, scholars, historians, traditionalists, orators and the like. Shia-Sunni clashes in the streets of Baghdad were soon forgotten, but the writings of the learned were not. Thus the Buwayhids, for temporary political advantages, divided Islam into two sects for all subsequent ages. While the Muslims were thus quarrelling among themselves, the Byzantine Emperor, Nicephorus Phacos, penetrated far into Muslim lands in Asia Minor, once threatening even Baghdad. Muizz ud Daula was unable to resist the Greek advance. He died in 966 A.D. A war for the throne, a usual feature of the Buwayhid dynasty, broke out among his brothers and nephews, till one of his nephews, named Azud ud Daula, captured Shiraz and Baghdad. Though cruel, Muizz ud Daula's reign was not devoid of constructive efforts. He built a palace in Baghdad, patronised men of arts and learning and made the mourning of the 10th of Muharram a permanent feature of the Shia faith.

Azud ud Daula : 949-83. Azud ud Daula was the son of

Hasan Rukn ud Daula, one of the brothers of Muizz ud Daula. He was the greatest of all the Buwayhid dynasts. Their power reached at its zenith under him. He subdued all his Buwayhid brothers and cousins and subjugated the various petty principalities which existed in Persia and Iraq. He thus became the sole ruler of the Buwayhid dominions, and "created an empire, approaching in size that of Harun al-Rashid", as Hitti writes. He was the first Muslim ruler to adopt the title of "*Shahinshah*". He married a daughter of the Caliph at-Taii, in 980, and gave his daughter in marriage to the Caliph, in the hope that one day a Buwayhid descendant might become a Caliph. Azud ud Daula was not only the greatest Buwayhid but also the most illustrious ruler of his time. Like his capital, Shiraz, he beautified Baghdad also, where he built several fine edifices. His most famous building was the hospital, called *al-Bimaristan al-Azudi*. It was run by twenty-four physicians who also functioned as a medical faculty. The glories of Azud-ud Daula's reign were sang by poets like al-Mutanabbi and writers like Abu Ali al-Farisi. He was also a patron of arts and learning. On the whole, Azud ud Daula was an exception to the Buwayhid dynasts who were mostly warlike and barbarous. His death in 983 was followed by the usual war of succession among his sons. First his son, Samsam ud Daula became the Sultan. But he was, within a year, dislodged by his brother, Sharaf ud Daula, who also did not remain long on the throne. In 988, he ordered the construction of an observatory, like that of Mamun before him, to study the movements of the "seven stars" of the Zodiac. But his own star was rapidly sinking. Within a year, in 989, he was dislocated from the throne by one of his brothers, named Abu Nasr Baha ud Daula.

Baha ud Daula: 989-1012 A.D. He was the last of the great Buwayhid rulers. During his reign, the Bawayhid dynasty was rapidly sinking to its nadir. This is illustrated by the fact that in 991, Baha ud Daula deposed the Caliph, at-Taii, in order to seize his wealth. He installed al-Qadir as Caliph, a cousin of the deposed Caliph. The two cousins, however, continued to dwell together in the same palace with mutual affection and respect—something unusual, as Ameer Ali remarks, for in the Abbaside family the succeeding Calip would at least blind, if not kill, his predecessor. During the reign of Baha ud Daula, his Persian vizier, Shapur Ibn Ardashir, built a library in Karkh, a suburb of Baghdad, in 993. It contained 10,000 books, many of which were valuable manuscripts studied by many eminent scholars in later times. It was destroyed by a fire in 1059, soon after the fall of the Buwayhids.

Malik al-Rahim and the End of the Buwayhids. After the death of Baha ud Daula the war of succession followed. Their family quarrels and their Shi'ite proclivities, so bitterly hated in Baghdad,

contributed to the downfall of the Buwayhids. Their last ruler, named Malik al-Rahim, the "Merciful King", (1048-55) was defeated by the rising power of the Seljuq Turks. Their leader, Tughril Beg, entered Baghdad in 1055, where the Caliph al-Qaim, welcomed him with open arms for he was a staunch Sunni-ite. "The Caliph" writes Ameer Ali, "himself placed two crowns on Tughril's head as the symbol of power over the Arabs and Persians, and invested him with seven robes emblematical of the seven countries of Islam. The heralds then proclaimed Tughril Sultan of the East and West." But it was the usual bombast of the medieval monarchs, for Tughril Beg never ruled any part of the "West", which was under the Fatimids, the Anti-Caliphs of Egypt.

A review of the achievements of the Buwayhids. In spite of the tumultuous habits and warlike tendencies of the Buwayhids, they did produce some great monarchs in the history of Islem. They were patrons of arts, science and philosophy, and builders of hospitals and libraries. Many eminent scholars, scientists, and authors flourished in their Age. Among them were the celebrated "Society" of the encyclopaedists, called the "*Ikhwan as-Safa*"—the Brethren of Purity. They wrote nearly fifty-two books on all the existing branches of science, arts and philosophy. Above all, the literary patronage and the Shi'ite and Persian proclivities of the Buwayhids made them encourage the revival of the school of the Mutazila. They protected the Mutazilities from the persecutions of the Orthodox divines and the fanatical mobs.

THE ERA OF SELJUQ DOMINANCE: 1055-92.

Rise of the Seljuqs. We return to the Abbaside Caliphs and the Seljuq Sultans during the age when the Seljuqs were great and powerful, and the Caliphs were though humble but dignified. Seljuq, the founder of the Seljuqi dynasty was the chief of the Ghuzz tribe, a branch of the Turkomans. He led his tribe into Khurasan and occupied Bukhara in 956. At this time, Seljuq and his tribe adopted Sunni Islam and became its ardent champions. From there his descendents conquered the whole of Khurasan from the later Ghaznavid rulers and made Merv their capital. When the Buwayhid power declined, they drove the Buwayhids from Persia also and made Isfahan their capital. In 1055, Tughril Beg, one of the grandsons of Seljuq, who had become the chief of his tribe, advanced upon Baghdad and defeated al-Basasiri, the Bawayhid governor of Baghdad. He entered the capital, and was well comed by Caliph al-Qaim as a deliverer for he relieved him of the domination of tha Shai'ite Bawayhids. After a brief stay, Tughril left Baghdad. Al-Basasiri, who had now accepted the service of the Fatimids of Egypt, captured Baghdad, deposed al-Qaim and proclaimed the Fatimid al-Mustanzir as the Caliph of Baghdad. But

his success was short-lived. Tughril Beg returned within a year, again drove out the Fatimid invader and restored al-Qaim to the Caliphate. The grateful Caliph conferred on him the Islamic robes of royalty and the title of the "*Sultan of the East and West.*" Thus began a new era of the Abbaside Caliphate in which their Seljuq masters who were staunch Sunni'ites, showed greater indulgence and benevolence towards the Caliphs than did the Buwayhids. The Caliphs enjoyed at least greater dignity, if not greater sovereignty, than before.

Abbaside Caliphs : al-Qaim 1030-75; al-Muqtadi 1075-94 : and al-Mustazhir 1094-1118. Al-Qaim remained the Caliph during the whole reign of Tughril Beg. When he died in 1075, his grandson, Abdullah, became the Caliph with the title of al-Muqtadi bi-amr-Illah. Muqtadi was a pious, magnanimous and resolute Caliph. He administered his private estates with care and restored peace and order to the troubled city of Baghdad. After his death, his son, Ahmad, became Caliph with the title of al-Mustazhir b'Illah. He too was pious and virtuous like his father and a patron of the learned. During his caliphate, the Seljuq power began to decline, which afforded some opportunity to his successors to assert more political authority than the Abbaside Caliphs had enjoyed since the rise of the Buwayhids and the Seljuqs. We shall deal with this "last flicker of the expiring flame" of the Abbaside Caliphate in a later chapter. We now turn to the first three rulers of the Seljuq dynasty, whose reigns constituted the most brilliant period of their dominance.

Sultan Tughril Beg : 1037-63. When Tughril took Baghdad in 1055, he inherited a large empire, including Khurasan, Persia and Iraq. Soon after he turned his attention towards Asia Minor, where the Byzantine emperors had made extensive conquests during the rule of the Buwayhids who did not check their advance. Tughril declared a holy war against the Greeks and drove them out of Cappadocia and Phrygia. Tughril was a champion of Sunni Islam and, therefore, became very popular with the citizens of Baghdad who were predominately Sunni'ites. The Sultan ordered the Shia Muazzins of Karkh, a Shi'ate quarter of Baghdad, to adopt the Sunni method of Azan, or Call to prayers.

Alp Arslan 1063-72 : Conquest of Asia Minor. Tughril Beg died in 1063 A. D., without leaving any male descendant. So his nephew, named Alp Arslan (the Brave Lion), succeeded him as the chief of the Seljuq dominions in Persia and Iraq. Caliph al-Qaim invested him with the temporal authority of Sultan, with the title of Azd ud Daula. Alp Arslan, however, never visited Baghdad during nine years of his reign. He remained mostly

at his capital Isfahan. The most important event of his brief reign was a decisive war with the Greeks. Soon after his accession, he renewed hostilities with them and captured Ani, the capital of Christian Armenia, and subdued whole of Armenia and Georgia. When returning from these campaigns, he heard of the advance of the Greek Emperor, Diogenes Romanus, against Asia Minor. The Emperor invaded Muslim territories with a large force of 200,000 men with an avowed purpose of capturing and destroying Baghdad. The Muslim and Christian armies met at a place called Malaz Kard or Malas Jard (Manzikart of the Europeans) north of Lake Van in Armenia, where a decisive battle was fought in 1071 A. D. Though the Muslims were outnumbered, they inflicted an utter defeat upon the Greeks. The Emperor was captured, along with his nobles. Sultan Alp released them after imposing a treaty upon them. But when the Emperor reached Constantinople, the Greeks deposed and blinded him. Nevertheless the Seljuq armies of the Sultan were able to subdue a large part of Asia Minor, which he bestowed upon his cousin, named Sulaiman bin Kutlumish. He established a Seljuqid dynasty of Nice, called the Sultanate of Rum, which existed till 1084, when it shifted its capital to Iconium. Thus began the process of the Turkish conquest of Asia Minor, which was completed by the Ottoman Turks, another branch of the Ghuzz tribe. It ended in the complete Turkification of Asia Minor and the final conquest of the Byzantine Empire—an achievement which was never accomplished by the Arabs or the Persians, during their days of military expansion and ascendency, Alp Arslan died in 1072. He was, as Ameer Ali writes, "a noble, benevolent and wise ruler : pure, pious and devout in his life, humane of heart, charitable and a friend of the poor, brave and chivalrous." During his reign and that of his successor, the Seljuq Sultanate reached its zenith of power and expansion. Civil administration of his Empire was conducted by his able and famous Persian wazir, Khwaja Hasan, surnamed Nizam ul Mulk.

Malik Shah: 1072-92. Alp Arslan was succeeded by his son, Jalal ud Din Abu Fath MALIK SHAH, who was the greatest of the Seljuqs. His reign was one of continuous peace and prosperity. His dominions, as Ibn al-Athir writes, "extended in length from Kashgar, a town in the extreme end of the land of the Turks, to Jerusalem, and in width from Constantinople to the Caspian Sea." But the greatness of his reign lay in the works of peace he undertook and the administration of his wazir, Nizam ul Mulk whom he also confirmed in his office.

Malik Shah's benign reign recalls the glorious reigns of Harun al-Rashid and Mamun in its magnificence and prosperity and in the works of public utility which he constructed. He was the first Seljuq ruler to make Baghdad his capital. He repaired and

constructed canals and dams in Iraq which were neglected since the advent of the Buwayhid power. Moreover, Baghdad and other cities of the Empire were adorned with colleges, schools, hospitals, libraries, mosques and palaces. Roads were constructed, and rest-houses and guard-houses were built all along the trade and pilgrim routes for the rest and protection of the merchants and pilgrims.

Reform of the Calendar. One of the most singular achievements of Malik Shah's reign was the reform of the calendar. On the suggestion of the Sultan or his wazir, a conference of astronomers, including the celebrated poet-astronomer, Umar Khayyam, was summoned in 1074-75 at the newly built observatory. The astronomers were commissioned to reform the Persian calendar. The reformed calendar, called Jalali calendar after Malik Shah's name, is "somewhat more accurate than ours", as Hitti remarks.

Nizam ul Mulk and his administration. On his accession, Malik Shah retained the services of his father's wazir, Nizam ul Mulk, whom the Sultan invested with absolute powers of administration. Nizam ul Mulk was an able and wise administrator—the ablest since Yahya bin Khalid Barmaki of Harun's reign, as Ameer Ali observes. Indeed, as Ibn Khallikan writes, "for twenty years of Malik Shah's reign, Nizam ul Mulik ruled the empire while the Sultan did nothing but sit on the throne or enjoy hunting." His administration was modelled on the old Persian system and military fiefs he allotted to Seljuq nobles and commanders. Nizam ul Mulk was more than a practical statesman. He was also a cultured scholar and a political thinker, one of the best Medieval Islam ever produced. He wrote the celebrated book on politics called "*Siyasat-namah*" in Persian, which is the best book in Islamic literature on the art of government. It is said that the work was undertaken on the suggestion of the Sultan who commissioned his courtiers to write him a book on good government to guide him in his royal functions. But the thing which made the name of Nizam ul Mulk immortal was the foundation of a college in Baghdad, known after him as the Nizamiyah, in 1065-67. It became a great centre of learning and research, in which among other great teachers was Imam Ghazali, who joined it soon after its establishment. The great wazir, was murdered in 1091 A. D. by an Ismaili assassin, sent by the arch-assassin, Hasan bin Sabah.

Malik Shah's death and the decline of the Seljuqs. A year after Nizam ul Mulk's death, his master Malik Shah also died. With his death departed the glory of the Seljuq era. Civil war broke out among his sons and the Seljuq Empire split up into various sultanates and principalities. Among them were the Seljuq

Sultanate of Rum, already mentioned, and the Seljuq Sultanate of Syria founded in 1094 by Tutush, a brother of Malik Shah He wrested Mecca and Medina from the Fatimids of Egypt and helped the Muslims in checking the Frankish Crusaders in conquering Syria. Thus it acted as a bulwark against the Fatimid Ismailism and the Crusaders Christianity, to both of which we shall now turn.

A Review of the Seljuq Era : Causes of the Seljuq decline. Three factors contributed to the decline of the Seljuqs after such a brief era of ascendencv and power. Firstly, the Seljuq empire retained its tribal structure to which the Seljuqs were accustomed in their Turkish homeland. Their tribal life inclined them towards truculence and civil wars. Secondly, like all Muslim dynasties of the Middle Ages, the Seljuqs had no law of succession which led to a war for the throne among the sons and successors of Malik Shah and destroyed the unity of their empire. Lastly, the the system of military fiefs which Nizam ul Mulk instituted encouraged separatist tendencies towards independence among the fief-holders and governors. So long as a strong ruler like Alp Arslan or Malik Shah was on the throne he kept in check their centrifugal tendencies. But his weak successors were unable to restrain their ambitious and powerful fief-holders from becoming independent rulers. On the whole, the Seljuq Sultans were military leaders. Their chief contribution to Islamic civilisation was a new life and vitality to the Muslim arms and the victory of Sunnism over Shiaism. The Caliphs also regained some dignity, though no authority.

CHAPTER 23

INDEPENDENT DYNASTIES IN THE WEST : THE FATIMIDS.

Three Divisions of the Islamic World. The Caliphate of Razi (934-40) was the last united caliphate of the whole Islamic world, excluding Umayyad Spain. Since then it began to split up into three distinct parts with their own political and even religious systems. They were, (*i*) the now shrunken Abbaside Caliphate of Persia and Iraq under the dominance of the Buwayhids and then of the Seljuqs: (*ii*) the Umayyad Caliphate of Spain which now proclaimed itself independent, owing no allegiance to the central authority of the Caliphs of Baghdad ; (*iii*) the Anti-Caliphate of the Fatimids which was established earlier at Qayrowan and extended to Egypt in 967 A.D. Thus the unity of Islam was split into three distinct states with their own dynasties and politico-religious and cultural systems. These divisions were also racial or national in origin. The eastern Abbaside Caliphate was Turko-Persian in nationality and culture. The western Fatimid Anti-Caliphate was Arab-Berber or Afro-Arabian in nationality and culture, with a thin veneer of Persianism imported by the Fatimids owing to their Persian and Ismailian origins. The fall of the Fatimids in 1171 brought about the religious, though not political, unity of the East and West of Islam. Muslim Spain in the Far West remained permanently dissociated from the bulk of the Islamic world. We shall first consider the Fatimid Anti-Caliphate and then the Ayyubid dynasty of Egypt and Syria.

THE FATIMID ANTI-CALIPHATE OF AFRICA AND EGYPT. 909-1171 A.D./297-567 A.H.

Origin of the Fatimids. Nothing is more obscure and controversial in the history of Islam than the origin of the Fatimids. They claimed themselves to be the direct descendants of Ali and Fatimah, hence styled as the Fatimids. According to them, Ubaydullah al-Mahdi, the founder of the Fatimid dynasty was the great-great-grandson of Ismail, the son of Jafar as-Sadaq, the sixth Imam of the House of Ali and Fatimah. This genealogy is accepted by such Arab historians as Ibn al-Athir, al Maqrisi, and Ibn Khaldun. However this claim was disputed by the contemporary Abbaside Caliphs. by the Umayyad Caliphs of Cordova and above all by the Bawayhid ruler, Azud ud Daula. He threatened to invade Egypt on this ground, although the Buwayhids were ardent Shi'ites themselves, Modern European writers, like de Goeje, Dr. Browne, and

others also regard their Fatimid descent as spurious. According to them Ubaydullah al-Mahdi was really a grandson of the great Ismaili propagandist, Abdullah bin Maimun.

Rise of the Fatimids. As we said in a previous chapter, Abdullah bin Maimun al-Qaddah, an ardent champion of the Sabiyya or Sevener sect of the Shia, called the Ismailis, organised a vast network of secret societies and propagandists throughout the Abbaside Empire. Soon after, the Ismailis acquired power in the Yemen. One Yemeni "da'i" or propagandist named Abu Abdullah went to al-Maghrib or North Africa. There he collected a great following among the Berber tribes, especially the Kitama tribe, whom he convinced of the speedy appearance of Mahdi or deliverer from the Aghlabid tyranny. Having thus completed his task, he wrote to the Ismaili Chief, Said bin Abdullah al-Qaddah, at Salamiya in Syria, the headquarters of the Ismaili Propaganda, to come to the Berber land. Said bin Hasan, who declared himself to be the son of Muhammad al-Habib, a great-grandson of Ismail, arrived in the dominions of the last Aghlabid ruler, Ziadadatullah. But he changed his name to Ubaydullah al-Mahdi, the expected Mahdi of the simple Berber tribes. Placing himself at the head of the Ismaili movement, Ubaydullah inflicted a decisive defeat on Ziadatullah in August, 909 A. D. and captured Qayrowan, the Aghlabid capital. Thus ended the Aghlabid rule and began the Fatimid rule in North Africa.

Ubaydullah al-Mahdi: 909-34. After the defeat and expulsion of the last Aghlabid, Ziadatullah, Said proclaimed himself as Ubaydullah al-Mahdi and the Ameer al-Momineen. The Ismaili Fatimids regarded themselves as the legitimate Caliphs or Imams of Islam and refused to owe even nominal allegiance to the Abbaside Caliphs of Baghdad. Thus the Fatimid schismatics created the first real breach in the politico-religious unity of Islam. Ubaydullah built a new capital near Qayrowan in 916, which was called al-Mahdiyyah after him. He faced many difficulties throughout his reign. The very first trouble came from his king-maker, Abu Abdullah who conspired with his brother, Abdul Abbas, against the Fatimid al-Mahdi. But Ubaydullah proved to be cleverer than he thought. He put to death both of them and their followers. After this, Ubaydullah set himself on a vigorous course of conquest. He subdued all the provinces of the Aghlabid kingdom and even conquered Morocco in the Far West. In the east, his armies captured Alexanderia in 914. He also organised a powerful naval force and captured the Mediterranean islands of Malta, Sardinia and Corsica, the Balearic Islands and others. This was how he established a vast empire in North Africa. He died in 934. Ubaydullah al-Mahdi proved himself as an able, energetic and vigorous ruler.

Al-Qaim: 934-46. Ubaydullah was succeeded by his eldest son, Abdul Qasim Muhammad Nizar, who assumed the title of al-Qaim bi-amr Illah. Al-Qaim was as energetic and vigorous ruler as his father, and followed the same aggressive policy. He created a powerful fleet and sent it against the Italian marauders. His fleet plundered and burnt Genoa, and other towns on the Italian coast. Al-Qaim also reduced Morocco again which had become independent under the Idreesids. He even sent an army against Ikhshidids of Egypt, which ended in failure, for a serious Berber revolt broke out in North Africa. The Fatimids had established a vast empire with the aid of the Kitama army, which caused untold hardships and atrocities on other Berber tribes. At last, led by a Khariji named Abu Yezid, the Berbers revolted against al-Qaim. They defeated again and again the armies sent by the Fatimid ruler till his authority was confined to his capital, Mahdiyya. At this time, al-Qaim died.

Al-Mansur : 946-52. Al-Qaim was suceeeded by his son Abu Tahir Ismail, with the title of al-Mansur bi-amr Illah. He too was a man of energy and determination. He spent his brief reign of six years in fighting against the Kharijis and Barber rebels who were then besieging Susa. Mansur defeated and drove the rebels back till he recovered the whole of North Africa again except Morocco which was conquered by al-Nasir of Spain. Abu Yezid, the Khariji school master and rebel leader, was at last captured and executed. Mansur then sent a fleet against the Italian coastal towns under Husayn al-Kalbi who ruled Sicily for a long time. Mansur died in 952.

Al-Muizz, 952-75 : the Fatimids Empire at its widest. Mansur was succeeded to the throne by his son Abu Tamim Maad, with the title of al-Muizz li-din-Illah. He was the greatest of the Fatimids of North Africa, under whom their empire reached at its widest limits. He sent a powerful fleet against Spain then ruled by an equally powerful king named Abdur Rahman al-Nasir, with the result that the Fatimids achieved nothing. But their fleet subdued Crete, which they ruled for some time. At the same time, the Fatimids finally subdued Sicily. But the greatest conquest of the Fatimids under al-Muizz was that of Egypt, which subsequently changed the whole complexion of the Fatimid Empire.

Conquest of Egypt : 969 A. D. "The conquest of Egypt" as Lane-Poole writes, "was indeed the aim of his life and to make Egypt a most prosperous and flourishing town was his dream." Al-Muizz entrusted this task to his commander named Jauhar al-Siqilli, formerly a slave brought probably from Sicily, hence called al-Siqilli. At this time the Ikhshidid power in Egypt

had declined after Kafur. Jauhar entered Egypt without any opposition and captured its capital al-Fustat in July, 969, where the Khutba was read in the name of the Fatimid Anti-Caliph and the Shia Azan was introduced. A few years later, in 973, al-Jauhar founded a new capital near Fustat, which he called al-Qahira, the Victorious, or Cairo, which has since then been the capital of Egypt. He also built the famous mosque of al-Azhar in Qahira, which was turned into an Ismaili academy by a later Fatimid ruler, al-Aziz. Al-Jauhar extended the Fatimid rule to Hijaz, including the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina where too he introduced the Fatimid khutba and azan. But this extension brought the Fatimids into clash with their co-religionists, the Carmathians, who had been hitherto their allies against their common enemies, the Abbaside Caliphs. The Fatimids captured Syria from the Caramathians. The rift with their fellow-Ismailians, the Carmathians, compelled the Fatimid king, al-Muizz, to hurry to Cairo on the urgent appeal of his general, al-Jauhar. Muizz entered Cairo soon after its foundation in 973 and made it the new capital of the Fatitmid Empire. Their former capital, al-Mahdiyya, now fell into the background. In Cairo, Muizz received the allegiance from he assembled delegates of Egypt, Syria and Hijaz. Two years later he died in 975.

Al-Aziz, 975-96 : Fatimid Empire at its Zenith. Al-Muizz was succeeded by his son Abul Mansur Nizar, who assumed the title of al-Aziz b'Illah. He was the fifth of the Fatimid dynasty to come to the throne and the first to begin his rule in Egypt. Under him, the Fatimid Empire reached at the zenith of its size and power extending from the banks of the Euphrates to the shores of the Atlantic. It included whole of North Africa, Egypt, Hijaz, Syria and even parts of Mesopotomia or North Iraq, where Khutba in the name was read at Mosul. Egypt became the real home of the Fatimids, where they made their mark in history. Al-Aziz was the wisest and most beneficent of the Fatimids. Under him the Anti-Caliphate of Egypt became the most formidable rival of the decadent Caliphate of Baghdad, ruled then by their fellow-Shi'ites, the Buwayhids, under Azud ud Daula.

Al-Aziz lived in Cairo in great luxury. He built palaces, mosques, bridges and canals in and around Cairo. He extended greatest tolerance and liberty to the Christians and Jews, whom he employed in high offices of the state in place of the Muslims. In this respect, he was greatly influenced by his Christian Grand Minister or Vizier, called Isa bin Nastur and his Russian wife, who was the sister of the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Jerusalem. Another Christian, the Patriarch Ibrahim, also stood high in

the court of al-Aziz, who allowed him to build and repair churches in Fustat. Al-Aziz died in 996 A. D. In spite of his greatness, al-Aziz committed two blunders of policy which proved ultimately fatal to the Fatimids. Firstly, he relied too much on his Christian favourites. But still more seriously, he changed the military system of his predecessors. Their power was based upon the loyalty and support of the Berber soldiers, especially of the Kitama tribe. But Al-Aziz was the first Fatimid who formed a corps of the Turkish slaves and Persian soldiers, probably as a counterpoise to the Berbers. These negro and Turkish mercenaries became too powerful and insubordinate during the reigns of his successors. He died in October, 996, and "with him" writes Ameer Ali, "ended the glory of the Fatimides."

Al-Hakim the Mad Fatimid, 996-1021. Al-Aziz was succeeded by his only son Abul Ali Mansur, with the title of al-Hakim bi-amr Illah. He was only a child of eleven when he came to the throne and went practically mad when he came of age. On his death-bed al-Aziz had placed his son and successor under the tutelage of his Chief Qazi, Muhammad bin Numan and his chief commander, Hasan bin Ammar. But another man, named Barjawan, acquired hold over the boy-ruler. Barjawan quarreled and defeated Ibin Ammar and became the regent. When al-Hakim grew up to manhood, he assumed supreme power into his own hands. But he was now practically mad. He began his career as a ruler by having Barjawan assassinated. The rest of his reign is nothing but a story of monstrous atrocities and bloodshed, in which most of the prominent men of his empire were put to death without rhyme or reason.

The Christians and Jews who had enjoyed such tolerance and power under his father also suffered. Their churches and synagogues were demolished, and their lands and properties confiscated. They were olso obliged to wear distinctive clothes. At the same time, the Mad Fatimid also appointed them to high offices. Indeed, in his more lucid moments, al-Hakim was a liberal and generous ruler and a patron of arts and learning. He built some fine edifices, such as mosques, colleges, and observatories in Syria and Egypt. One of his famous buildings was the *Dar al-Hikma* (the House of Wisdom), which was really a centre for Ismailian propaganda. Finally, the Mad Anti-Caliph at last completed the Ismailian doctrines by claiming himself to be an incarnation of God, a claim which was readily accepted by a new Ismailian sect, called *al-Durziyyah*, after al-Daruz, one of its first missionary and a minister of al-Hakim. Whether al-Hakim claimed Godhead due to his mental disorder or in moments of his rational lucidity, nevertheless, he left behind the cult

of the Druzes, which still flourishes among the mountain tribes of Lebanon. Owing to his madness and his murderous deeds, a conspiracy to kill him was hatched by several members of his court, including his sister named Sitt ul-Mulk. One night in February, 1021 A. D., when al-Hakim went to a lonely place in Cairo, called al-Muqattam, he was murdered by some unknown men and his body disappeared. The Druzes, who considered him a God-King, still believe that one day he would return as a Mahdi. With his death began the decline and decadence of the Fatimid dynasty.

Decadence of the Fatimids : the Rise of the Wazirs : Az-Zahir, 1021-35. After the death of al-Hakim, his son Abu Hashim Ali was placed on the throne with the title of Àz-Zahir li Izaz din-Illah. He was then sixteen years of age. His aunt, Sitt ul-Mulk, became the regent. After her death four years later, two officials of Hakim, named Mizad and Nafir, became Wazirs and ruled the Empire in the name of the nominal Anti-Caliph. During Az-Zahir's reign the decadence of the Fatimid Empire began. A great portion of Syria went out of the Fatimid hands. At the same time, the persecution of the Sunnis, especially of the Maliki school, began. At this time, the Fatimid rulers joined hands with thc Christian Emperor Constantine VIII. Az-Zahir was a pleasure-loving prince and died of plague in 1035.

Al-Mustansir: 1035-94. Az-Zahir was succeeded by his little son, a child of seven, named Abu Tamin Maad, under the title of al-Mustansir b'Illah. His long reign, from 1035 to 1094, one of the longest in the history of Islam, witnessed the final disintegration of the Fatimid Empire. The Caliph passed from the tutelage of one Grand Vizier to that of another. First his mother ruled the Empire, then al-Jurjarai became the Vizier. On his death, a Jew named Abu Said, acquired the chief influence over the Anti-Caliph. When he was assassinated by another Jew, yet another Vizier came to the forefront, and so on, till the Empire was brought to the verge of ruin and destruction. During this period of confusion and anarchy, first the Holy Cities in Hijaz broke away from the Fatimid Caliphate, in 1047, and then North Africa, led by a Zirid prince, Muizz bin Badis, became independent. He discontinued to read Khutba in the name of the Fatimid Caliph and substituted the name of the Abbaside Caliph al-Qaim, whom he acknowledged as the Head of Islam, and thus restored the unity of the Islamic world. In 1071, Sicily was also lost by the Fatimids to the Normans.

In 1060, Al-Mustansir had an opportunity to supplant the Abbaside Caliphate for sometime and become the only Caliph of the whole of Islam. It was the revolt of al-Basasiri, the last

Buwayhid governor of Baghdad, who was driven out of the capital by Tughril Beg in 1055. On Tughril's departure, al-Basasiri who had now joined the service of the Fatimids, re-captured Baghdad and proclaimed al-Mustansir as Caliph in the old capital. Even al-Qaim accepted this proclamation. But Tughril re-entered Baghdad in 1060, defeated al-Basasiri, and again re-installed the Abbaside al-Qaim as the Caliph. Thus the Sunni Islam was saved from the greatest peril it had ever to face from the Fatimid Anti-Caliphate.

In the meanwhile, the deterioration of the Fatimid Empire continued. Anarchy and famine spread ruin and misery on all sides. In 1061, a bloody dispute broke out between the Turkish and African slave-soldiers in the Fatimid army. After several years of fighting, the Turkish commander, Nasir, captured and plundered the palace of the Anti-Caliph. He was at this time left with nothing "but the prayer-mat on which he was seated." At the same time, a severe famine reduced the people of Cairo to eating dogs and rats and even human flesh. At last, Mustansir invited the governor of Akka in Palestine, Badr al-Jamali, to assume supreme power as his Wazir and Ameer al-Juyush, Chief Commander, in 1073. Badr al-Jamali ruled the Empire for next twenty years and restored peace and order. But he failed to recover Damascus. He died in 1094, followed by al-Mustansir a few months later.

The Fall of the Fatimids: 1094-1171. Al-Musta'li: 1094-1101. Mustansir had nominated his eldest son Nizar as his successor. But the King proposed and the Vizier disposed. After Mustansir's death, the new Ameer al-Jayush, al-Afzal, the son of Badr al-Jamali, who had succeeded to his father's office, placed a younger son of Mustansir, named Abul Qasim Ahmad on the throne with the title of al-Musta'li b'Illah. Nizar, who had fled to Alexandria, was captured and executed. Nevertheless, he became the Imam of the Assassins, the Persian sect of the Ismailis. Though al-Afzal tried to regain Palestine, he failed. The Crusades had begun. The declining Fatimid Caliphate became either an ally of the Frankish Crusaders, or was neuteral in the struggle between Islamand Christianity, which was fought by the Seljuqs and the Franks.

Muta'li died in 1101. Al-Afzal placed another boy-king on the Fatimid throne, an infant son of Musta'li, under the title of Al-Ameer bi-Ahkam Illah—the Commander who executes the orders of Allah. He ruled from 1101 to 1130. He really carried out the orders of his powerful Ameer ul-Juyush. The remaining history of the Fatimid Caliphs is a story of endless intrigues, feuds, jealousies and murders of their commanders and officials of the court. When al-Ameer died in 1130, he was succeeded by **al-Hafiz** (1130-49), a puppet in the hands of his chief commander and

vizier, Abu Ali Ahmad, a grandson of Badr al-Jamali. The authority of the Anti-Caliph did not extend beyond the walls of his palace. Hafiz was followed by his son, **az-Zafir**, 1149-54, who was also a mere cypher in the state, a play thing in the hands of his viziers. On his assassination, his infant son was placed on the throne with the title of al-Faiz b'nasr Illah (1154-60). On his death, the vizier placed Zafir's nephew on the throne under the title of **al-Azad** li-din Illah (1160-71). Under az-Zafir a Kurdish commander, named Ibn al-Sallar, had become the vizier. At this time, the condition of Egypt was most ruinous. Taxes had become unbearable. The Frankish Crusaders had approached the vicinity of Cairo. In 1167, they stood at the gates of Cairo. In these conditions Salah ud-Din put an end to the Fatimid Anti-Caliphate and in 1171 restored the spiritual authority of the Caliphs of Baghdad. Thus ended the Fatimid Anti-Caliphate. A few years later, Salah ud-Din also proclaimed Sunnism as the state-religion of Egypt.

Fatimid Administration. The Fatimid administrative system was copied from the Abbaside system or rather from the old Persian prototype. It comprised civil and military departments, both of which were headed by viziers. The officials were divided into several classes, viz., "*the men of the sword*" who supervised the army and war office, "*the lords of the door*" who attended the person of the Anti-Caliph, and the "*men of the pen*" who were civil functionaries, holding the lowest rank in the three classes. The men of the pen included (i) the Qazi who was also the director of the mint ; (ii) the Chief Propagandist who presided at the Dar al-Hikma ; (iii) the Mohtasib or the Inspector of the market who supervised the commercial activities in the bazar and inspected weights and measures ; (iv) the State Treasurer who was in charge of the Bayt al-Mal ; (v) The Reader of the Quran who recited the Quran to the Ani-Caliph, and (vi) the clerks, and secretaries of the various departments who constituted the lowest ranks of the "men of the pen". Al-Muizz was the first ruler of the Fatimitids who organised this administrative machinery.

Military Organisation. The Fatimid army consisted of three principal ranks : (i) *Ameers* who included the highest officers and the sword-bearing body guards of the Caliph; (ii) Officers of the guard, including masters, called *Ustaz*, and eunuchs; and (iii) the different regiments which were known after the names of some caliph or vizier, or nationality, such as Hafiziyah, Juyushiyah, Sudainyah, etc. The number of the regiments was very large and varied at different times. One thing which distinguished the Fatimid from the Abbaside military organisation was the position and role of the Fatimid Ameer al-Juyush, the supreme Commander,

who was non-existent in the Abbaside Caliphate. The Ameer al-Juyush was both the supreme commander and the prime minister. This fact enabled the holder of this important office to capture all authority of the state and reduce the iater Fatimid Caliphs to mere puppets. Under the first ten Fatimid rulers, however, these officers fulfilled the ordinary functions of their office.

In the heyday of their power, the Fatimids maintained a powerful fleet, for they sent naval expeditions against their Christian and Muslim rivals across the Mediterranean. Their fleet consisted of over 75 galleys, ten transports and other ships. It was commanded by an admiral. It was stationed at Alexandria and Damietta in Egypt and at Ascalon and other coastal towns in Syria.

Provincial Administration. The Fatimid Empire was divided into four big provinces, viz., North Africa, Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia and Asia Minor. Every big province was further subdivided into smaller provinces, headed by a governor. For instance, Egypt was divided into four provinces of Upper Egypt, Sharqiya, Gharbiya and Alexandria. Finally, the management of the local affairs was in the hands of the local authorities.

Social life under the Fatimids. Egypt under the Fatimids enjoyed such a peace, tranquility and prosperity as she had never known since the ancient days of the Pharaohs. They had made Egypt the home province of their vast empire. The result was that the revenues of Egypt which used to be sent to Damascus or Baghdad, began to be spent within the province, thus making it the most prosperous part of the Islamic world. Cairo was the richest city at that time. An eye-witness account of this prosperity and riches was given by Nasir-e-Khusraw, a Persian poet, traveller and Ismailian missionary who visited Cairo during 1046-49, in the reign of al-Mustansir. He writes : "There I saw wealth belonging to private individuals such that if I should speak of it or describe it, the people of Persia would refuse to credit my statements. I could neither limit nor define their wealth, nowhere have I seen such prosperity as I saw there. The population of Egypt was, at the lowest computation, five times that of Nishapur". He further adds that the people enjoyed a great security of property and good government and great riches and with all this "neither did the Sultan oppress or wrong any one, nor did his subjects keep anything hidden or concealed." The Fatimid Anti-Caliphs lived a life of ease and luxury. According to Nisir-e-Khusraw, the Fatimid Caliph, al-Mustansir. built a Ka'ba-like pavilion where he sat and drank wine while beautiful slave-girls danced and sang around him. It was, indeed, a strange

fantasia of an Ismailian Caliph. It is said that the palace of the Fatimids was served by 30,000 persons, of whom 12,000 were slaves or servants and 1000 horse and foot-guards. The caliph owned 20,000 houses which fetched huge income in rents. The streets of Cairo were lighted with lamps. The shopkeepers sold at fixed prices. Anyone found charging more or cheating was paraded through the streets, while he rang a bell and confessed his guilt even. The doors of the shops of jewellers and money-changers were not locked. Numerous public baths for men and women were found in the Fatimid capital. But in spite of these great riches and prosperity, famines and floods were frequent. And the life of the Egyptian peasantry, who had been the most hard-pressed part of humanity since the ancient days of the Pharaohs, remained as hard and miserable as ever.

Science and Intellect under the Fatimids. The rule of the Fatimids was barren of scientific and intellectual achievements. For this their Ismailian fanaticism was responsible. It was not conducive to intellectual pursuits and scientific enquiry. The Fatimid Caliphs and viziers founded academies and colleges, but only for the dissemination of the Ismailian doctrines and propaganda. Only in astronomy, or astrology and optics some progress was made. Ali bin Yunus, the greatest astronomer Egypt has ever produced, and Ibn al-Haytham, an astronomer, and physicist, lived in the court of al-Hakim.

Dar al-Hikma. One of the most remarkable foundations of the Fatimids was the *Dar al-Hikma*, the House of Wisdom, founded by al-Hakim in 1005. In name it resembles the Bayt al-Hikma of Mamun, but in fact the two were quite different. Mamun's Bayt al-Hikma was a centre of science and learning, while the Fatimid Dar al-Hikma was a centre of Ismailian indoctrination and propaganda. Instead of philosophical discussions and scientific enquiry and translation, here the Fatimid Anti-Caliph and his Chief Propagandist conferred Ismailian diplomas on those who had been taught and trained for the propaganda work of spreading Ismailism. Royal libraries also existed for the same purpose. The Fatimid Caliphs built several observatories in Cairo, one of which was situated at al-Muqattam, a hill in the vicinity of Cairo. The Fatimids built some fine palaces, mosques, colleges, massive city-gates, etc.

A Review. The Fatimid rule in Egypt was an interesting episode in the history of Islam, representing the extremist reaction of Ismailism. Had it not been smothered by Salah ud Din, it would have brought about a permanent change in the history of Islam. Indeed, Islam would have been replaced by a queer mixture of Zoroasterian and Hindu polytheism. "Had the Ismaili

doctrine" writes Guyard, "been able to maintain itself in Egypt in its integrity, it would have involved the civilisation of the Muslim world". Moreover, the Fatimid rule represents the farthest limit the Persian influence in Egypt ever reached. Thus the Fatimid rule in Egypt may be briefly characterised as a Perso-Zoroasterian, extremist Shi'ite reaction. Like several other heretical movemenrs, e.g., those of Babek or Carmathians who were their fellow-Ismailians, the Fatimid Ismailism also did not offer any plan or program of social reform and development.

Chapter 24

THE CRUSADES AND THE AYYUBIDS

1097-1250 A. D./491-647 A. H.

Geopolitical Situation of the Islamic World on the eve of the Crusades. For about three centuries, from the Eleventh to the Thirteenth of the Christian era, Islam and Christianity or Asia and Europe were at loggerheads with each other in the Holy Lands or Palestine and Syria. These wars between the two religions are known as the Crusades, or the Wars of the Cross, the Christian emblem which the Christian warriors bore on their bodies and banners; hence known as the Crusades. The Islamic world presented then a pitiable picture of internal divisions and dissensions. It was split into the Abbaside Caliphate of the East and the Fatimid Anti-Caliphate of the West. In between the two, Syria and Palestine were a sort of non-man's land, now overran by the Fatimids and now by the Seljuqid Sultans and Atabeks. The Saliuqids set up various petty principalities, stretching from Mosul in the north to Jerusalem in the south. Indeed, as Hitti remarks, "almost every Syrian town of any consequence had at this time its own Seljuq or Arab ruler". Moreover, these petty dynasts were constantly quarrelling with each other. Some of them were : (1) the Seljuq Sultanate of al-Rum, (1077-97) with its capital at Nice in Asia Minor. It was founded by Sulaiman, a son of Alp Arslan, the second Seljuq Sultan. It was the first to be attacked and conquered by the Crusaders in 1097. (2) The Seljuq Sultanate of Syria (1094-1117) was founded by Tutush, another son of Alp Arslan. He captured Aleppo in 1094, which became his capital. He extended his rule to Edessa (al-Ruha) and Mosul. But when Tutush died a year after in 1095, his two sons, Rizwan and Duqaq, began to quarrel among themselves and thus divided their little kingdom into two, viz., the principality of Aleppo, ruled by Rizwan and the principality of Damascus, ruled by Duqaq. The quarrels of the two brothers enabled the invading Crusaders to advance into Syria and capture large parts of it. (3) Palestine and the southern regions of Syria were in the hands of the declining Fatimids, who possessed, for instance, Jerusalem, Ascalon, Acre and Tyre, the last three being their naval bases. The Fatimids were once a great power, but at the commencement of the Crusades, they were also in a state of decrepitude and disintegration, and, therefore, unable to resist the onrush of the Crusaders. Indeed, three great powers of the Islamic world at that time, the

Seljuq Sultans and the Abbaside Caliphs in Baghdad and the Fatimid Anti-Caliphs in Egypt, remained indifferent to the Christian invasions and atrocities which they inflicted upon the unfortunate Muslim peoples of Palestine and Syria. The Abbaside Caliphs and the Seljuq Sultans of Baghdad remained deaf to all appeals for help, though they expressed much sympathies for the sufferings of the Muslims, while the Fatimid Anti-Caliphs expressed none. On the contrary, they sometimes even joined hands with the Crusaders against the Muslims. These geopolitical conditions of disunity and dissensions in the Muslim world at the outbreak of the Crusades enabled the Christian invaders to win success and victory at first.

Causes of the Crusades. (1) Religious causes. The apparent cause of the Crusades was religious. But it was not so simple as it may seem. Before the Muslim conquest, Syria and Palestine were predominantly Christian countries. Muslim conquest did not immediately bring about any change in the life and religious freedom of the Christians. The Arab rulers granted them freedom of religion and worship and security of life and property. The Christians enjoyed freedom of movement, trade and commerce and were employed in all the offices, even the highest, of the state. Christian churches, monasteries and convents existed and flourished all over the empire, including the Holy Lands, and the Christian pilgrims from all countries, including European countries, freely visited the holy places in Jerusalem and in other places in Palestine and Syria. But, in spite of the Muslim tolerance and solicitude for the Christians, their pilgrims carried tales of Muslim oppression and persecution to their homelands and thus spread hatred against the Muslims in their countries. The bitterness of feelings increased when the tolerant Arab rulers were succeeded by the Turkish and Seljuq rulers who did not show the same respect and tolerance for the Christian pilgrims. They were ill-treated and even robbed, just as the Muslim pilgrims were robbed by their fellow-Muslims, like the Bedouin followers of the Carmathians. So the Christian pilgrims carried these tales of ill-treatment and fanned the religious hatred and animosity of their co-religionists in Italy, France and other European countries.

The Christians of Europe in the Middle Ages were thoroughly organised into a militant and aggressive body, called the Church Militant, which has been aptly described as the Conquering Church, headed by the equally militant Popes and a wide network of clergy, monks and nuns. They aroused their followers to the white heat of religious frenzy and fanaticism to fight against the infidels, as they called the Muslims. The Crusades were actually hatched by the Popes and their clergy. "As early as

1073" writes Rev. R. F. Walker, "Pope Gregory VII had contemplated the first Crusade." But it was Pope Urban II who raised the battle-cry of a holy war against Islam in March 1095 in the Council of Placentia and later in November of the same year in the Council of Clermont, which became the immediate cause of the Crusades.

Muslim arms had been pressing hard upon the southern periphery of Europe, from Spain, and Sicily to Constantinople. Though the Muslim advance in Spain, France and Italy had been halted, yet in the East, the new Turkish converts to Islam, the Seljuqs, were advancing victoriously towards Constantinople. They threatened to subdue the Byzantine Empire at last, after the failure of the Arabs to capture it during several centuries of war with it. The Seljuq Sultans of al-Rum advanced upto the shores of Marmora, and threatended to capture Constantinople. This made the Byzantine Emperor, Michael Ducas, to appeal to the West in 1094 to save the Eastern Roman Empire from Muslim conquest. This appeal served as a pretext to the Pope, Urban II, to fulfil an age-old dream to bring the Greek Orthodox Church into the fold of the Western Catholic Church by defeating the Seljuq invader. Hence he raised the battle-cry of a holy war on Islam. In this way he hoped to heal the centuries-old schism in Christianity.

(2) Politico-economic causes. Religion was undoubtedly the moving spirit of the Middle Ages. But it alone was not the only cause of the Crusades. These religious wars were motivated by economic and political causes also. The basic economic and political reason was the expanionist tendencies of European feudalism, especially of France where it had been well-organised in those days. If the Popes and the Church were the inspirers of the Crusades, the French nobles or Franks, as they were then called, were its warriors and soldiers. Every aggressive war is a result of the surplus in population and production. Feudal Europe in general and feudal France in particular had achieved some surplus in wealth and population and was eager to fight in foreign lands, especially a religious war which excited so much zeal and fanaticism in the Middle Ages. The French barons and the German knights were restless with energy to go to wars in the Holy Lands to save the True Cross and purge them of the infidels. Thus the Church diverted the thoughts and energy of the feudal lords and nobles into the channels of a "holy war" on Islam. So long as this surplus of human energy and of material resources lasted, the Crusades continued. When it was depleted by war, famine and death, the Crusades ebbed away and came to a close.

Yet another economic cause was the commercial greed and

grab of the Italian merchants and traders, especially of the mercantile republics of Venice, Genoa, etc. The Italian marchant communities had since long traded with the Levant or the countries of Syria and Palestine. But the Muslim conquest of these lands had cut them off for the traders and merchants of Venice, Genoa, Pisa and other Italian cities. The "Holy War" against the Muslims offered an opportunity to them to re-open the trade with them. The Italian merchants, therefore, lavishly contributed money and men to the Crusaders, and played an important part in these religious wars and conquests.

(3) **Lust for plunder, rapine and loot.** Though some of the Christian crusaders were inspired by religious motives, yet it was not true of all of them. Many of them had taken the Cross for the immoral and sordid motives of plunder, rapine, sensuality and such other seven sins. The surplus sons of the feudal barons hoped to acquire fiefs and estates in the Holy Lands, the princes and kings expected to carve out new principalities and kingdoms, common people dreamed becoming rich by plunder and loot, while the ordinary criminals and sinners searched for profitable penance by rapine and loot in the Holy Lands, and thus expiate for their sins. Only medieval religious mind can explain how a sinner can be absolved from his sins by committing greater ones in holy places. Be it as it may, religious fanaticism was mixed with wordly motives of greed, loot and other earthly sins which made the Crusaders march against the Muslims. As Ameer Ali writes, "sensuality was allured by the fabulous flavour of Oriental wines and the magical beauty of Grecian women. Avarice, ambition and lust thus co-operated with faith in exciting a religious outburst." To most of the adventurous nobles and hungry serfs, Crusades were not religious wars but plundering expeditions. To the great masses in France, Germany and Italy, suffering under feudal oppression and exploitation, "taking the Cross was a relief rather than a sacrifice." (Hitti).

(4) **Preaching of Pope Urban II.** The immediate cause of the Crusades was the preaching of the holy war against the Muslims by Pope Urban II. On November 26, 1095, he delivered his sermon at Clermont in south-eastern France in which he urged the faithful to "enter upon the road to the Holy Sepulchre, wrest it from the wicked race and subject it" to themselves. He subtly appealed to the more sinful motives of his flock by promising "a remission of sins to those who joined the Crusade, and paradise to those who fell in battle." The war-cry thus raised by the Pope resounded throughout Europe and thousands of the crusaders rallied around the Cross borne on their banners. Their battle-cry was "*Deus le veult*"—God wills it.

Thus began the Crusades.

History of the Crusades. The Crusades began in 1097 and lasted till about 1291 A.D. In all, there were seven or nine (and according to some, thirteen) Crusades. But for our purposes, the first four are really significant. Their whole history can be easily divided into three periods. The first period was of Christian successes and conquests. It lasted from 1097 to 1144. It covered the period of what is called the First Crusade. The second period was that of Muslim reconquest of lost territories, and lasted from 1144 to 1196, during which the Christians were driven out of the Holy Lands except for a coastal strip. It covered the period of Second and Third Crusades. The third period was one of repeated attempts by the Christians to re-conquer "the Kingdom of Jerusalem", all of which ended in failure. During this period, they extended their military activities to Egypt and other neighbouring Muslim lands. But they were finally driven out from there by the Ayyubids and the Mamluk rulers of Egypt. This period covered the Crusades from to Fourth to the Nineth and ended in 1291 A.D. We shall deal with this last but insignificant period only briefly.

The Period of Christian Conquest. Soon after the preaching of Pope Urban II, the armies of the crusaders began to march towards the Holy Lands by the land-route through the Byzantine Empire. The first army was led by Walter the Penniless in 1096. It was defeated by the Christian Bulgarians and failed to cross the Balkans. The second army of forty thousand was led by Peter the Hermit. It defeated all its Christian foes in the Byzantine Empire and successfully entered Asia Minor, where it attacked the Seljuq Sultanate of Nice. The Sultan defeated them. Their leader, Reginald, embraced Islam. Thus the second crusading army also petered out. The third and fourth armies similarly ended "in tumultuous scenes of debauchary, rapine and violation," perpetrated against the Christians, and Jews of the Byzantine Empire, and other European countries. These crusading forces were led by the Christian priests without any military organisation. The real work of conquest began when the feudal barons and princes began to organise and lead the crusading armies. With this began the First Crusade.

First Crusade : 1097-99. In 1097 a more systematic invasion was organised by the princes of feudal Europe. A huge army of seven lakh crusaders, led by Godfrey of Bouillon, marched through the Balkans. In its crusading zeal it was ready to fall upon and plunder the Christian Constantinople. But the Byzantina Emperor, Alexius, skilfully diverted it against the Sultanate of al-Rum. They laid seige to its capital, Nice. The Sultan surren-

dered his capital to the Byzantines, and moved to Iconium, which became his capital. In 1098, Edessa was also captured. The main Crusading army, however, marched from Nice towards Syria, where it laid seige to the coastal city of Antioch, which was held sacred by the Christians since ancient times. The siege of Antioch lasted for nine months, from October 1097 to June 1098, during which the crusaders indulged in numerous acts of brutality and debauchery. At last when the city fell to them due to the treachery of an Armenian, the crusaders commenced a frightful butchery. "The dignity of age, the helplessness of youth and the beauty of the weaker sex, were disregarded by the Latin savages. Houses were no sanctuaries, and the sight of a mosque added new virulence to cruelty." At least ten thousand citizens were butchered by the crusaders. Then they marched upon a populous and flourishing city in Syria, known as Marrat un-Noman, where they slaughtered one hunded thousand inhabitants till the streets ran with blood. The survivers were sold into slavery.

Kingdom of Jerusalem : 1099-1187 A.D. From Marrat un-Noman, the crusading army advanced against Jerusalem, the main goal of their invasion. The city was in the hands of the Fatimids of Egypt, but was poorly garrisoned by about one thousand troops. They were attacked by the crusading army of forty thousand men. After a siege of about one month, Jerusalem was captured by the Crusaders on 15th July, 1099 A.D. As usual they perpetrated most horrible barbarities upon the citizens, men, women and children. Seventy thousand of them were slaughtered in and around the Mosque of Umar, the Aqsa mosque, where the blood was knee-deep and reached horses' bridles. "Heaps of heads and hands and feet were to be seen throughout the streets and squares of the city". Such was the Christian entry into Jerusalem, which can be well contrasted with the Muslim entry into Christian Jerusalem in 637 A.D. without any bloodshed at all. After their bloody victory, the Crusaders established the Kingdom of Jerusalem and elected Godfrey of Bouillon as its first King with the title of "baron and defender of the Holy Sepulchre". Thus ended the first Crusade.

Godfrey extended the boundaries of his Kingdom by capturing coastal towns of Jaffa, Arsuf, Qaysariya and Akka, with the aid of the Italian merchants and commanders who saw in the possession of such towns new markets and free ports for their merchandise. Other Christian commanders captured a few other towns like Nabulus, Tiberias, etc. On Godfrey's death in 1110, his brother Baldwin succeeded him as the King of Jerusalem. He ruled till 1118, and extended his kidgdom from Aqabah on the Red Sea to Beirut. His cousin and successor, Baldwin II (1118-31) added a few more towns. Another crusading commander, Count Raymond, captured Tripoli in Syria, which became his principality,

held as a fief of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Thus during the first period of Christian conquest and settlement, four Christian principalities were established on Muslim soil, namely, the principalities of Edessa and Jerusalem, held by Burgandian princes, the principality of Antioch held by Normans and the principality of Tripoli held by the Provenceals. Besides them was the kingdom of Armenia at Tarsus, held by the Byzantines.

Period of Muslim re-conquest : 1144-92. During the first period of Christian conquest, the Seljuqid empire was in a state of civil war and confusion. After the death of Malik Shah in 1092, a struggle for the throne began among his sons. At first Mahmud, a son of Malik Shah, became the Sultan, but he died soon after. Then Barkiaruk, another son of Malik Shah, became the Sultan in 1094. But a war broke out between him and his brother Muhammad, which lasted till Barkiaruk's death in 1104, when Muhammad became the Sultan of the Seljuqid empire. It was during this civil war that the First Crusade began and the Crusaders conquered vast territories in Syria. Muslim refugees fleeing from Christian slaughter and captivity poured into Baghdad and appealed to the Sultan and the Caliph for succour, but to no avail. When Muhammad died in 1118, his son Mahmud became the ruler of Iraq. It was during Mahmud's reign that the Muslim counter-Crusade against the Christian rulers of Edessa and Syria began. It was led by Imad ud Din Zangi.

Rise of the Zangids : Imad ud Din Zangi : 1127-46. Imad ud Din Zangi was the son of Aksunkar, a Turkish chief of Sultan Malik Shah and governor of Iraq. After Aksunkar's death, Zangi succeeded his father. Though he was then only fourteen years old, he showed signs of military and administrative skill, energy and ability which he later displayed in the war against the Crusaders. In 1122, he was appointed as governor of Wasit by Sultan Mahmud, the Seljuq ruler of Iraq. Five years later, in 1127 A.D., the Caliph, al-Mustarshid invested him with the government of Mosul, Harran and Nisibeen in Upper Mesopotamia, with the title of Atabek or Ameer of Mosul. Zangi now devoted his life to a war against the Crusaders, who had now found a Muslim leader to meet their challenge on equal footing.

The Crusaders were at this time extending their territories into Syria and raiding cities on the borders of Iraq and Egypt such as Harran, Nisibeen, and Raqqa on the Iraqi borders and al-Areesh on the Egyptian border. The city of Aleppo, ruled by the worthless Seljuq Sultan Rizwan, was subjected to a humiliating tribute. Many other cities and towns in Syria were similarly obliged to pay tribute to the Crusaders, who turned their Muslim inhabitants into serfs and slaves. "They spared

no one," writes Ibn al-Athir, "neither those who believed in the unity of God nor those who denied it." On the invitation of the people of Aleppo, in 1128, Zangi marched to their succour and took possession of the city. He then captured Hamah from the Crusaders and defeated them at al-Asarib. The troubles in Baghdad on the death of Sultan Mahmud temporarily diverted Zangi's attention to Baghdad. But he soon returned to Syria where the Crusaders had received large reinforcements from Europe and were preparing for more raids and depredations in Muslim territories. They laid siege to Shayzar, a famous fortress near Hamah in Syria, whose Arab chief appealed to Zangi for help. Zangi marched to his aid and the Crusaders fled away. Zangi then captured Ba'lbek from them, and appointed Najm ud-Din Ayyub, father of Salah ud-Din, as its governor. But the greatest success of Zangi was the conquest of Edessa or al-Ruha in Upper Mesopotamia, in December, 1144 A. D., where he defeated Joscelin II, the most notorious Crusader. The capture of Edessa destroyed at a single blow one of the four principalities the Crusaders had set up on Muslim soil. Its conquest also sent a wave of fury and fanaticism through the whole of Europe and thus led to the Second Crusade. Imad ud Din Zangi, however, did not live long after his great victory. He was murdered by one of his soldiers in 1146. He was succeeded by his second son, Nur ud-Din Mahmud, as the Ameer of Aleppo, who continued the counter-Crusade against the Franks.

The Second Crusade : 1147-49. Edessa was the fifth "sacred place" of the medieval Christians, coming after Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome and Constantinople. Its conquest by Zangi sent a wave of alarm and indignation throughout Europe. The then Pope, Eugene, III, called for a new crusade against Islam, while St. Bernard of Clairvaux travelled throughout Europe inciting the princes and nobles and peasants to a holy war. The German Emperor, Conrad III, and the French King, Louis VII, responded to the call for the Holy War and marched in 1147, with a huge army of 900,000 men to the aid of their brethren in Syria and Palestine. This is known as the Second Crusade. The combined German and French or Frankish, armies reached Antioch in July, 1148 and joined the early crusaders. After indulging in unbridled debauchery and licence in Antioch for some time, the Frankish and German crusaders advanced upon Damascus, to which they laid siege for several months. But when Zangi's two sons, Saif ud Din Ghazi, the Ameer of Mosul and Nur ud Din Mahmud, the Ameer of Aleppo, hurried to the aid of Damascus, the Crusaders raised the siege and retreated towards Palestine in 1149 A. D. Thus ended the Second Crusade without any success for the Crusaders.

Nur ud-Din Mahmud continued the war against the Crusaders of Antioch. In 1151, he took large part of the principality of Antioch, and captured its crusading chief, Bohemond III. In 1154, he took possession of Damascus, then threatened by the advance of the Crusaders. In 1164, he inflicted a crushing defeat on the Franks and captured Raymond III, the ruler of Tripoli. But Baldwin III, the King of Jerusalem captured Ascalon in Pâlestine from the Fatimids, which opened the way to the Crusaders' advance upon Egypt, then in the weak hands of the Fatimids. However, Nur ud-Din also began to interfere in the affairs of Egypt by sending his own officer, Shirkuh, to Cairo, as we shall presently describe. However, the valiant hero, Nur ud Din Mahmud, died in 1174, leaving his eleven year old son, Ismail, entitled al-Malik as-Saleh, as the ruler of Damascus.

Rise of the Ayyubids. Nur ud Din Mahmud had in his service two intrepid Kurdish chiefs, Najm ud Din Ayyub and his brother Asad ud Din Shirkuh. Zangi had appointed Najm ud Din Ayyub as the commander of Ba'lbek, when he capture it from the Crusaders in 1139. During the reign of Nur ud Din Mahmud, who had become the master of Damascus, Shirkuh was sent by Nur ud Din to Cairo. The Fatimid empire was then tottering to its fall under its last ruler, Azad li-din Illah. Real power was in the hands of his Ameer al-Juyush, named Shawer as-Sa'di. Shawer was, however, driven out of Cairo by a rival clique. He fled to Damascus and appealed to Nur ud Din for help. He sent Shirkuh to Cairo who reinstated Shawer into power once again. But he soon turned against his benefactor and drove him out of Egypt with the support of the Crusaders. A year later, Shirkuh defeated the combined armies of the Franks and the Fatimids and captured Alexandria. The Crusaders, however, entered Cairo and became its masters. The last Fatimid ruler Azad, appealed to Nur ud Din for aid. He ordered Shirkuh to advance upon Cairo. On Shirkuh's approach, the Franks hurriedly left Cairo. Shirkuh entered the Fatimid capital and put Shawer to death for his treachery, and himself became the Ameer al-Juyush and the grand vizier, in 1169. But he died two months after, when his nephew, Salah ud Din Ayyubi, became the Ameer al-Juyush and the grand vizier. He won the hearts of the people of Cairo by his wise, just and liberal rule. So when Azad, the last of the Fatimids, died in 1171, Salah ud Din put the Fatimid dynasty to an end and proclaimed Nur ud Din Mahmud as his suzerain.

Sultan Salah ud Din Ayyubi : 1174-93. Salah ud Din, called "Saladin" by European authors, had two great aims in life, viz., to restore the supremacy of Sunnism in Fatimid Egypt and to drive out the Frankish Crusaders from Palestine and

Syria. The first aim he achieved with so little disturbance that, as the Arab historian, Abu'l Fida, puts it, not even two goats clashed their horns in Cairo. After the death of the last Fatimid Anti-Caliph Azad, in 1171, Salah ud Din substituted the name of the Abbaside Caliph, al-Mutazi, in the Friday Khutbah for that of the Fatimid Anti-Caliph. For his second aim of a holy war against the Franks, he had to take possession of Syria. His strategy of war against the Franks was to envelope them by a two-pronged attack from Syria in the north and Egypt in the south. So after Nur ud Din Mahmud's death in 1174, Salah ud Din advanced into Syria, where after some fighting in Aleppo, he was recongnised as the independent ruler of Aleppo and Damascus and the name of Nur Din's young son, Malik as-Saleh was removed from the Khutbah. On his request, the Abbaside Caliph al-Mustazi conferred upon him the title of Sultan and sovereignty of Syria, Egypt and Hijaz in May, 1175. Thus Sultan Salah ud Din became an independent ruler of the West. Ten years later, he took Mosul from the Zangid chief and made other Zangid and Seljuq chiefs of Syria and Asia Minor his vassals. In the meanwhile, the Ismaili Assassins, instigated by his enemies, threatended Salah ud Din. But he marched against their stronghold at Masyad in the mountains of Lebanon and compelled its chief, Rashid ud Din Sinan, to stop their murderous activities.

Salah ud Din and the Franks. After unifying and pacifying Syria under him, Salah ud Din was at last free in 1187 to devote his energy for the holy war against the Franks. A truce had existed between the Franks and the Sultan since long. But the Frankish leader, Raynald de Chatillon, broke the truce by plundering a large Muslim caravan near al-Karak in Syria. Upon this, Salah ud Din retaliated. The Franks who were quarrelling among themselves, patched up their mutual quarrels and united their forces for a war on the Sultan. The two armies met in the plain of Hittin near Tiberias on July 1, 1187. The Crusaders were utterly defeated by the Sultan, who killed and captured twenty thousand of them, including Guy de Lusignan, King of Jerusalem. The captured were chivalrously treated by the Sultan. The battle of Hittin was a turning-point in the history of the Crusades. The Muslim arms were now victorious over the Franks. Salah ud Din marched against Jerusalem. After a siege of one month, its Crusading defenders surrendered the city to the Muslims on October 9, 1187. Thus after about a century, Jerusalem returned into Muslim hands. But this time no scenes of horrible slaughter and debauchery were to be seen. The Greek and Syrian Christians were allowed to live in Jerusalem with full rights of religious freedom. But the Frankish settlers were to leave the city within forty days,

under the safe-conduct of the Sultan's soldiers, for Tripoli or any other Frankish possession in Syria. From Jerusalem, Salah ud Din advanced against other Frankish towns and captured Laodicea or Latakia, Jabala, Buzair, etc. The Franks were now virtually driven out of Syria. Only Tripoli, Tyre and Antioch remained in their hands.

The Third Crusade : 1189-92. The fall of Jerusalem sent a new wave of anger and alarm throughout Europe. The thought of the True Cross and the Holy Places being once again in infidel hands stirred the crowned heads of Europe to a new Holy War. They unleashed a new Crusade, known as the Third Crusade. It was joined by the aged Emperor of Germany, Frederick Barbarossa, the King of France, Philip Augustus, the King of England Richard the Lion-Hearted, three most powerful potentates of Europe, besides several lesser ones, like the Duke of Austria. In fact, this Crusade was the largest in numbers and the one which provided many themes for legends and romance woven around the names of its two great contestants. Salah ud Din and Richard the Lion-Hearted. The German Emperor, Barbarossa, however, was drowned on the way and his disheatened soldiers returned home. The other Crusaders reached Syria by sea or land in large numbers. They marched against Acre on the Syria coast.

Siege of Acre, September 1189-September 1191. Acre was situated on a strip of land, jutting into the sea and was well fortified. The Crusaders laid siege to it. They could be easily reinforced by the Italian ships, bringing men and material to the besiegers. On hearing of the Crusaders' movement, Salah ud Din also reached the place to relieve the besieged city. Had he attacked the Crusaders at once, as he intended, he would have thrown them into the sea. But his lieutenants advised him to fight the Franks in the open ground before Acre. Thus began a three-cornered struggle between the Muslim defenders inside Acre, the Crusading besiegers and Salah ud Din, which lasted for two years. When in June, 1191, the English King Richard reached Acre, he assumed the supreme command of the Crusading forces. Now the siege was conducted with great violence. The defenders, decimated by famine, pestilence and lack of reinforcements, at last capitulated on the condition that no life would be sacrificed by the Franks. But the English King Richard the Lion-Hearted disregarded this condition and killed the garrison in cold blood. Salah ud Din, whose army was much smaller than the Crusaders and was weakened by pestilence, looked on helplessly. All his appeals for help to the Caliph and other Muslim rulers went unheeded.

Peace with Crusaders : 1192. After the capture of Acre,

Richard led his Crusaders towards Ascalon. Salah ud Din marched parallel to him, giving many battles on the way. On Salah ud Din's orders, the city of Ascalon was evacuated by its inhabitants and then razed to the ground. When Richard reached it, he found it in ruins. He then knew that he had to fight Salah ud Din to a bitter end. He was already feeling tired of the unending and fruitless struggle and was deeply impressed by the indomitable will and energy of his great adversary. He then opened negotiations for peace with Salah ud Din. After prolonged negotiations peace was concluded between the two on November 2, 1192, on these conditions : (i) the coastal strip from Jaffa to Acre would remain in the hands of the Crusaders ; (ii) the towns and cities which Salah ud Din had conquered would remain in the hands of the Muslims ; and (iii) the Christian pilgrims had the right of free entry into Jerusalem. The possession of Acre, as a European author remarks, was to act "as a fortified entry into Palestine and a jumping-off ground to protect Christian pilgrims, if need be, by arms." It was with such intentions that peace was concluded. Richard the Lion-Hearted who was tired of the crusading business, soon after returned to England. With this ended the Third Crusade.

Death and character of Salah ud Din. Salah ud Din did not live long after the conclusion of peace. He fell ill and died a few months after in Damascus on March 4, 1193 A.D./27th Safar, 589 A.H. Salah ud Din Ayyubi was one of the greatest heroes of Islam. His fame rests not only upon his victorious struggle against the Crusaders, his military skill and leadership, but also on the sterling qualities of his head and heart. Among them the most remarkable were his sincere devotion to the cause of Islam, and his humane and chivalrous treatment of his Christian enemies. They were usually set free by him when they fell into his hands even though they had provoked him a lot by their murderous and treacherous activities. Towards his Christian and Jewish subjects he was always tolerant. He possessed all the qualities of an ideal Muslim ruler, that is, piety, simplicity, kindness, and powers of leadership. He was "tender-hearted, condescending and affable, full of patience and indulgence". He befriended the learned and the virtuous. He was more than a warrior. He was a champion of Sunnism. He patronised scholars and encouraged theological studies. He built dykes, dug canals, and founded colleges and hospitals all over his kingdom. Though a king, he lived a simple life. When the treasures of the Fatimids fell into his hands, he distributed them all among his soldiers. It is said that when he died, his personal property comprised only his coat of mail, his horse and one dinar and thirty-six dirhams. To Islam he rendered two great services. Firstly, he restored its religious unity by re-establishing the Sunnite faith in Fatimid Egypt.

Secondly, he put a check to the advance of the Crusaders, and confined them to a narrow coastal strip from where they were driven away by his successor.

Third Phase : Christian failures at re-conquest. The Crusades dragged on for a century more after Salah ud Din's death. The Christians of Europe vainly attemped to re-conquer the lost territories. However, the rest of their history may be, briefly, told here below.

Salah ud Din's successors. After Salah ud Din's death his sultanate was divided among his sons and brothers. His eldest son, al-Malik al-Afzal, was crowned at Damascus, Al-Aziz at Cairo, al-Zahir at Aleppo, while Salah ud Din's younger brothers, al-Adil, at Karak and Shawbak in north Syria. Edessa was held by the children of Shirkuh and Yemen by another brother of Salah ud Din. However, disputes and quarrels broke out among the sons of Salah ud Din, which enabled their uncle, Al-Adil, to oust them all from their territories during 1193-99. Thus in February, 1200, Al-Adil became the Sultan of Syria, Upper Mesopotamia, Egypt and Arabia. These family quarrels encouraged the Crusaders to launch their counter-attack.

The Fourth Crusade : 1195-99. Two years after Salah ud Din's death, Pope Celestine III, inflamed a new Crusade. In flagrant breach of the treaty with the Muslims, the Christian invaders attacked Beirut and captured it. Al-Adil marched against them. He captured Jaffa, and besieged the Crusaders in Tibnin. After a long siege the Crusaders sued for peace and the Fourth Crusade came to an inglorious end.

Sack of Constantinople. During the Fourth Crusade occurred an event which throws a lurid light on the true spirit of the European Crusaders. It was the sack of Constantinople by the fellow-Christians of Western Europe. In 1204, a large force of the Christian pilgrims and crusaders passed through the Byzantine capital. Some of the Flemish pilgrims were so much inflamed by the sight of a mosque in a Christian capital where "one God was worshipped without the Son and the Holy Ghost" that they at once attacked the Muslim worshippers and put the mosque to fire. The fire, however, spread to the neighbouring houses and engulfed a large part of the city, which was reduced to ashes. Then the Crusaders fell upon the defenceless inhabitants who were their co-religionists and slaughtered and plundered them mercilessly. Then they set up a new Latin Patriarchate in Constantinople under the Pope of Rome. Thus they hoped to put an end to the age-old schism between Eastern and Western Christianity.

Fifth Crusade : (1217-21). In 1216-17, Pope Innocent III preached a new Crusade, the Fifth Crusade. A huge force of about two and a half lakh was raised, mostly Germans, by the princes of Germany and Hungary. But it included also "women, children, the old, the blind, the lame, the leprous",—a proof that the manpower surplus of Feudal Europe was being rapidly depleted by a century and more of crusading. The Crusading army landed first in Syria which it devastated. Then the Crusaders sailed to Egypt and laid siege to Damietta in the Nile delta. Al-Adil marched against them, but died on the way. His sultanate was divided among his sons. The eldest son, Malik al-Kamil obtained Egypt ; Malik al-Muazzam took Damascus and Palestine ; while Malik al-Ashraf took Aleppo. The Egyptian ruler, Malik al-Kamil, tried to resist the Crusaders' advance. But they captured Damietta and marched on Cairo, with al-Kamil retreating before them. He tried to negotiate peace on unfavourable terms, but the victorious Crusaders refused. When they reached near Cairo, the Nile was in flood. Tbe Egyptian cut down the dykes, and innundated the country around the Crusaders, who were forced to sue for peace, in September, 1221. They surrendered Damietta and sailed away from Egypt. Thus ended the Fifth Crusade.

Jerusalem re-taken : 1227-44. A new Holy War was unleashed by the German Emperor, Frederick II. At this time, the sons of al-Adil, were quarrelling among themselves. The Egyptian ruler, al-Kamil became an ally of the German Emperor and yielded Jerusalem to him in 1227, along with a corridor linking Acre to Jerusalem. Jerusalem again remained in the hands of the Crusaders till 1244, when Kamil's nephew and successor, al-Salih drove them out of it with the aid of the Khwarizm Turks.

Mongol Eruption and proposals for Christian-Mongol Alliance against Islam : In between the fifth and sixth Crusades occurred a catastrophic event in the Islamic world. It was the furious onslaught of the Mongol hordes of Changiz Khan, which the Abbaside caliphs and their masters, the Shahs of Khawarizm, striken with Sisyphean decay and degeneration, were unable to resist. The Mongols under Changiz Khan and his sons and successors overran the eastern lands of the moribund Abbaside Caliphate, as well as the vast territories and lands of the Russian and Slavic tribes and principalities, just emerging from their shadowy past. The victorious march of the Mongols into the Islamic world raised the hopes of the Crusading kings and popes of Western Europe. They sought to achieve several ends by forging an anti-Islamic alliance with the all-conquering Mongol chiefs, viz. (*i*) to divert the destructive fury of the Mongols from Europe towards Muslim lands in Asia and Africa, (*ii*) to encompass the total destruction of the Islamic world, and (*iii*) to

convert the victorious Mongols to Christianity and thus, by a single stroke, to bring the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe into the fold of the Catholic Christianity of the West.

Christian missions were sent to the Mongol chiefs at Karakorum, the new Mongol camp-capital in Mongolia. The Pope wrote a letter to the Mongol chief, Kuyuk Khan, to accept Christianity and to enter into an alliance with the Christians against Islam. Kuyuk Khan replied that God had commanded his people to conquer the whole world and asked the Christian kings to come and submit to him in person before he would consider their proposals for an anti-Islamic alliance. A year or two later, a Mongol embassy arrived in Cyprus where Frankish king, Louis IX, was preparing to launch a new crusade against Ayyubid Egyyt. The Mongols proposed to the French king to undertake a joint offensive against Islam. In response to it, the French king sent an embassy to Karakorum. Nevertheless, the Christian-Mongol alliance did not materialise, partly because the Mongol chiefs were not keen to be Christian proselytisers, but mainly because they planned to conquer the whole Islamic world by themselves, without any Christian aid or advice.

Sixth Crusade : 1248-50 : A new crusade wes unleashed by the King of the Franks, St. Louis IX, who had already reached Cyprus from France for this purpose. He sailed for Egypt in 1248 with a large army and captured Damietta. The Egyptian Ayyubid Sultan al-Salih was then on his death-bed and the ensung troubles in the Ayyubid State were favourable for the new Crusade. However, when the Franks advanced from Damietta up the Nile to Cairo, they had to fiight a battle at Mansurah, in 1249, where the Frankish King was defeated and forced to surrounder himself along with all his knights and nobles. While negotiations about a ransom were in progress, a mutiny broke out in the Egyptian army, against Ayyubid Sultan Turanshah, led by his Turkish Mamluk generals, Aybek and Baybars, because of the favours the Sultan had shown to his fellow-Kurds. The Mamluk commanders killed the Sultan in 1250. They first made Shajar, the wife of al-Salih, the queen, but later elected al-Ashraf Musa, a descendent of Salah ud Din, as the sulan. But he ruled only for two years, for in 1252, one of the Mumluk generals, Aybek, captured the throne. He then founded the Mamluk danasty of Egypt. A little before him, another slave-commander, also named Aybek, had founded another Slave or Mamluk dynasty in the distant South Asian sub-continent.

The Egyptian Sultan Aybek was killed by his Mumluk rival, Baybars, a little before the latter won his singular victory over the Mongols in 1260.

Seventh Crusade : 1260-91. The Mamluk Sultan Baybars (1260-77) rendered as great a service to the cause of Islam as had Salah ud Din before him. He inflicted a crushing defeat on the all-destroying Mongols at Ayn Jalut on September 3, 1260. He thus saved Egypt and the Muslim world from utter destruction at the hands of the Mongols who were inclined towards Christianity then and were in alliance with the Crusaders. Baybars, who aimed at being a second Salah ud Din, then turned upon the remaining territories in the possession of the Crusaders. He captured many Crusaders towns, such as Caesaria, Safad, Jaffa and above all Antioch and finally Hisan al-Akrad, an impregnable fortress of the Crusaders. These victories called forth a new Crusade from the crowned heads of Europe. In 1270, the King of France, St. Louis IX and the King of England, Edward I, embarked upon the Seventh Crusade. The French King died on the way, but the English King pressed on to Acre. His French ally, Charles of Anjou, who succeeded St. Louis, made peace with the Muslims. This was the end of the Crusade. Edward I of England also sailed away to his country. Baybars was succeeded by Qalawun, an equally energetic and indomitable anti-Crusader. He captured Tripol in 1289. After his death in 1290, his, son, al-Ashraf, captured Acre, the last stronghold of the Crusaders on Muslim soil. Then all other cities rapidly passed into Muslim hands and the Crusaders were driven into the sea. Thus ended the Crusades.

Their Consequences. The Crusades produced no effects on the history, society or culture of Islam. They were a mere episode, barren of all consequences, so far as the Muslims of the Middle Ages were concerned. In fact the Muslim world soon forgot about them.

The Crusades, however, had some effects on Europe. The Christian nations of Europe were very uncultured and backward peoples. They were greatly impressed by Muslim culture, arts and learning, which they acquired from them. Thus began what is called the dawn of European Renaissance of science and learning. Moreover, the channels of trade and commerce between Europe and the Muslim East were again re-opened.

Historical Significance of the Crusades. The Crusades have been differnetly evaluated by the historians and writers. One of them writers," The Crusades form one of the maddest episodes in history." To Hitti, they appear in their rightful setting "as the medieval chapter in the long story of interaction between East and West, of which the Trojan and Persian wars of antiqnity form the prelude and the imperialistic expansion of modern Western

Europe the latest chapter." To the writers of novels and romances they have always been a prolific source to weave their stories of romance and chivalry, especially, around the names and paladins of Salah ud Din and Richard the Lion-Hearted. But they can be evaluated differently if properly viewed from the angle of the history of human cultures and their conflicts.

Sisyphean Medieval Islam and Feudal Europe contrasted. The Crusades constituted three centuries of conflict between Feudal Christendom of the West and semi-feudal, and semi-tribal culture of the Islamic East, stricken with Sisyphean cycles. The former was on the offensive, which reveals its inherent strength, while the latter was on the defensive, which reveals its internal weakness. Though the Islamic world was on a higher level of culture, so far as arts, learning and economic standard of life were concerned, it was, however, on a lower level of civilisation, so far as socio-economic organisation and political system and military leadership were concerned. The Islamic world possessed no uniform way on life, no single culture and civilisation in all their varied aspects, religious, political, social and economic. On the contrary, it was a medley of various levels of cultures and civilisations, tribal, feudal and slave. It was torn by religious dissensions and schisms and weakened by endless dynastic changes and political anarchy. Tribes fought with tribes, towns with towns, and kingdoms with kingdoms under bewildering varieties of religious sects, dynastic ambitions and even predatory instincts of men and kings, towns and tribes—a veritable picture of Sisyphean anarchy and disintegration. As against this, Feudal Europe presented a picture of monolithic uniformity and unity, both of social life and political leadership. It suffered from no religious schism, no political anarchy, no tribal predatoriness and no weakness of slavery. On the contrary, medieval Europe possessed one uniform civilisation and culture, based upon feudalism and Christianity. Whole of Western Europe had one way of life in all its varied aspects, religious, social, political and economic from one end to the other. That is why when a Pope called for a Holy War on Islam, hundreds of thousands of men, kings, nobles and serfs, rose to their feet and hurled themselves thousands of miles away against the Muslim world. On the other hand, no such response was forthcoming from the Caliphs of Baghdad, the Anti-Caliphs of Cairo and the innumberable kings, rulers and peoples outside Palestine and Syria which alone suffered from Christian Crusaders' butchery and depradations. Only one thing saved the Muslim world from utter destruction by the relentless Crusaders. The surplus of manpower and material resources of Feudal Europe was but meagre. Three centuries of expansionist adventures literally exhausted medieval Europe. Its feudalism was, so to say, thrown out of gear. Money economy, based on trade and com-

merce which flourished during the predatory days of the Crusades' undermined it. Commercial towns on the coasts of southern and western Europe turned from feudalism to trade and commerce and evolved a new social order which became the foundation of the modern capitalist Europe, with its aggressive and expanding Imperialist systems of to-day. No such transformation occurred in the Muslim World, involved as it was in Sisyphean decay and disintegration. The Crusaders came and went away, but the Muslim world learnt nothing and forgot nothing. Therein lie the seeds of its modern tragedies and misfortunes, from which it suffered when Western Europe again reverted to its ways of aggressive wars and conquest. Viewed thus, the Crusades appear not as scenes of romance and chivalry or even as stories of Crusading treachery and butchery, but as a prelude to greater conflicts to come.

CHAPTER 25

LAST DAYS OF THE ABBASIDE CALIPHATE: MONGOL ERUPTION

FROM MUSTARSHID TO MUSTASIM
1118-1258 A. D./512-656 A. H.

We turn to the Abbaside Caliphs once again. We left them when al-Mustazhir (1094-1118) was struggling against the sons of Sultan Malik Shah in order to regain independence from his Seljuq master, Sultan Mahmud. Imad ud Din Zangi, the Seljuq governor in Baghdad and Iraq, however, kept the Caliph within limits. But at last Zangi was forced to go to Mosul by the Caliph, where he achieved far greater fame and glory in his war against the Crusaders, as we have seen. When Sultan Mahmud died, the Caliph embarked on a campaign against his successor, Sultan Masud. But his troops deserted him in a battle near Hamadan. He was captured and put to death in 1118. His son and successor to the caliphate, Mustarshid, followed his father's policy of independence. In 1135, he was killed by an Assassian and was succeeded by his son, al-Rashid. He remained Caliph but a few months. He fled to Mosul within a year, when Sultan Masud marched on Baghdad. The Sultan then installed a new Caliph, named al-Muqtafi (1136-60). The House of Seljuq was now hopelessly divided in itself, which afforded an opportunity to Muqtafi to become really independent and extend his authority over the whole of Iraq. Like his predecessor, he too paid no heed to appeals for aid from the Muslim peoples in Palestine and Syria, suffering from the Crusaders so miserably. Muqtafi was succeeded by his son with the title of al-Mustanjid (1160-70). He also continued to enjoy some measure of independence and authority in Iraq. The Seljuqs were too weak to assert power over the Caliph or Baghdad, while the Crusades and Counter-Crusades raged in Western Asia in which, however, the Caliph was least interested. He was said to be a generous, and just ruler, who abolished oppressive taxes. On his death, he was succeeded by his son with the title of al-Mustazi (1170-80), but there is nothing of import to notice during his rule. Mustazi, however, extended his temporal authority to Ahwaz and Fars. The spiritual authority of the Abbasides was at its highest, for the Fatimid Anti-Caliphs had vanished and Salah ud Din had proclaimed the Abbasides as the Caliphs in the West as well.

Al-Nasir (1188-1225) : al-Zahir (1225-26) and al-Mustansir (1226-42.) The next three Caliphs were really far more independent and powerful than their predecessors. But it proved to be the last flicker of a dying flame, for a far more terrible peril appeared in Central Asia than the Abbaside Caliphate had ever to face. It was the Mongol eruption. When Mustazi died in 1180, he was secceeded by his son, al-Nasir li din-Illah. He ruled for forty-five years. He was, indeed, a real ruler of Iraq and of the Persian provinces he held. He maintained a respectable army at Baghdad which increased his influence with the neighbouring princes. On his death, his son became Caliph with the title of az-Zahir, but died within a year. His son then ascended the throne with the title of al-Mustansir (1226-42). He was the last-but-one of the Abbasides. It was during his reign that the Mongols under Changiz Khan burst over the Kingdom of Khwarizm, which was the opening scene in the bloody drama of the Mongol eruption. Like several other petty rulers, Mustansir also prepared his little army to resist the Mongols. But the Muslim society and state system were unable to meet the Mongol threat, for they had become decadent, stagnant and rigid during the last two centuries and more.

Rise of the Assassins. During the last days of Malik Shah, the Seljuq Sultan, a new Ismailian sect rose into revolt in Persia. They called themselves *Batiniyya*, but were popularly known as the *Hashisheen*, or the addicts of '*hashish*'. The Crusaders corrupted the Arabic word as "Assassins", a term which passed thence into various European languages as a term for murder which was one of the methods the Hashisheen used against their enemies. For three centuries, from the 11th to the 13th, of the Christian era, the Hashisheen were the terror of the Muslim world, especially in Persia, Iraq and Syria. Their sect was founded by an Ismailian, named Hasan-e-Sabah.

Hasan-e-Sabah: and his Assassins. Hasan-e-Sahab's full name was Hasan bin Ali bin Muhammad bin Jafar bin Husayn bin as-Sabah al-Himyari. But he briefly styled himself as Hasan-e-Sabah. He was born at Qum in Persia, where his father had settled after migrating from Kufa. As a boy and young man he was passionately fond of study and by the age of seventeen he had read widely and vocraciously. He was at first a Shia of the moderate Twelver sect, the *Athna-Ashariyya*. But while still young, he fell under the influence of several Ismaili "*da'is* or propagandists, and became an Ismailian himself or the Shia of the Sevener brand. Then he was at Rai. He visited the Fatimid capital, Cairo, during 1078-80 A.D., where he was welcomed by the Chief Propagandist of the Fatimid court of al-Mustansir. There he became a follower of Nizar, the eldest son of the Fatimid

Caliph al-Mustansir. But the intrigues of al-Musta'li, the second son of the Fatimid Caliph, forced Hasan to return to Persia as a follower of al-Mustansir's son, al-Nizar. Hence Hasan's followers were also known as the *Nizaris*. He eluded the attempts of Nizam ul-Mulk to arrest him and settled in the northern regions of Persia. In 483 A. H./1090-91, he and his followers captured the famous fortress of *Alamut* which meant the "School of the Eagle" in the mountains of Mazandran or North Persia, always well-known as the land of the lost causes. Soon after he captured several other fortresses in north Persia and extended his rule over vast tracts in Mazandran, Fars, Kuhistan and Khuzistan. His followers even captured large areas in the mountains of Lebanon in Syria, where they threatened the Christian Crusaders and the Muslim counter-Crusaders. Two years latter, in 1092, one of his secret emissary or *Fidai* killed Nizam ul Mulk, the Wazir of Sultan Malik Shah, the first prominent man to die at the hands of the Assassins.

For the next three centuries, when the Mongols destroyed the Assassins root and branch, the terror of the Assassins spread far and wide in the Muslim world. The dagger of the Assassins, like the sword of Democales, hanged over the heads of the enemies of Ismailism, whether they were rulers or professors of Sunni theology and law. Even the Christian Crusaders in Syria dreaded the dagger of the Hashisheen, corrupted by them into *Heissessini Asssesini* and *Assassini*, and finally into its English form, the *Assassins*. The Assassins were, however, known by different names according to the various aspects of their sanguinary Order. They were known as the *Fatimis*, for they were the followers of the Fatimid Anti-Caliphs of Cairo, or as the *Sabi* or Seveners for they followed the Seven Imams of the Shia, or as *Batini* because of their "esoteric" doctrines, or as *Malahida*, the impious heretics, as they were in the eyes of the Sunnis and the moderate Shias of the Twelver sect, or simply the *Hashisheen*, that is, the eaters of *Hashish* or "*bhang*" as it is called in Urdu, not because they were its addicts, but because they drugged a "Fidai" or would-be secret murderer with it when he was initiated into the Order and taken to the "Paradise" which they had built in a mountain valley of Alamut, the "School of the Eagle."

The "New Propaganda". Hasan-e Shbah's doctrines were called the "New Propoganda". Really he taught, not a new doctrine, but a new method of propagating the old doctrines of the Fatimid Ismailism. It was the "new" method of dagger and poison, wielded by his secret emissaries, called the *Fidais* or the Devoted Ones, whom he sent on the murderous mission of killing any one who opposed Ismailism with sword or pen or a fiery tongue. It would be, therefore, more accurate to call it not

"New Propaganda" but "New Organisation" or "New Order". Hasan-e-Sabah's New Order was organised on the basis of the older grades of the Ismailis. At the top stood the *Dai-ad-Duat*, the Chief Propagandist or the Grand Master, popularly called the *Shaikh-ul-Jabal*, the Mountain Chief, a term which the Europeans wrongly interpreted as "the Old Man of the Mountain". Next came several "*Duat-ul-Kabir*" or the Grand Priors, each one of them had a particular area of his own, where he supervised and controlled the work of his subordinate followers, called the "*Dais*" or Propagandists. All of them were fully initiated into the doctrines, aims and politics of Ismailism. Next came the lower ranks of this sanguinary Order, the Assassins proper, who were either too fresh to be initiated into the Higher Order or too simple-minded to understand its "higher" doctrines, aims and politics, They were elassified into three grades. First came the *Rafiqs* or the Companions who had proved their worth or had qualified themselves by their devotion to or understanding of their secret faith to be initiated into the Higher Order. Next came the *Lasiqs* or the Candidates, who had taken the oath of allegiance to their Superiors but did not yet fully comprehend the Faith. Lastly came the dreaded *Fidais* or the Devoted Ones,—the angels of death, whom their Superiors sent secretly to murder with dagger or poison the enemies of Ismailism. They were the real Assassins, who went to their unfortunate victim disguised as merchants, students, servants, pilgrims or the like.

The Fidais inspired the Muslims and the Crusading Christians with terror and silenced many a man by murder or by a threat of murder. The kings trembled on their thrones and the Ulema in their pulpits at the very name of the Assassins. Nizam ul Mulk was the first famous man to die at the hands of an Assassin, who was a Daylami soldier in his camp. Other famous men, rulers and others, to die at the Assassin's hands were Fakhr-ul-Mulk, the son of Nizam-ul-Mulk in 1106, the Fatimid Anti-Caliph Al-Ameer (1130), the Abbaside Caliph al-Mustarshid (1135), his son and successor, Caliph ar-Rashid (1137). They also threatened the life of Salah-ud-Din Ayyubi and other renowned Crusaders and Counter-Crusaders. Fakhr ud Din Razi, the famous philosopher and a professor of theology, (who flourished at the end of the 12th century), used to criticise the Ismailians violently in his lectures. One day one of his students, who had attracted his notice by his close attention to his lectures, came to him and offered him to choose between a purse of gold or a dagger in order to stop his attacks on the "hereties" of Alamut. The professor chose the purse and became silent in his criticism of the Ismailians. Afterwards, when some one asked him why he no longer attacked them, he replied that he was

now convinced "by arguments both weighty and trenchant" of the truth of Ismailism.

End of the Assassins. For three centuries the Assasins held Islamic world in terror. The Seljuq Sultan, Malik Shah, led two expeditions against them in the mountains of North Persia, but unsuccessfully. His successors also failed in their attempts to crush the Assassins of Alamut. At last, they found a match in the Mongols of Changiz Khan. The "Scourge of Allah", as the Mongols were called, rid Islamic world of the Assassins. The last days of the successors of Hasan-e-Sabah at Alamut were full of the scenes of mutual assassinations. The eighth and the last Grand Master of Alamut, named Rukn ud Din Khurshah, who had murdered his father, Ala-ud-Din, in 1255, ascended the throne in their "paradise" at Alamut. But a year later, on November 19, 1256 A. D., exactly a year after his father's murder, Rukn ud Din surrendered himself to Halaku Khan, the Mongol Chief, and was put to death a few months after by the Mongols. Alamut and all their strongholds in Persia were captured and destroyed by them and the whole multitudes of the Ismailians were put to death in cold blood by the relentless invaders. Thus ended the New Propaganda of Hasan-e-Sabah. Their Syrian branch, however, continued to exist, but gradually lost its blood-thirsty character. A few of the Ismailians have survived in Persia, but they had also long given up their sanguinary "propaganda". They are now known as the followers of the Agha Khans and constitute the quietist, peace-loving, money-making communities in various parts of the modern world from Egypt to Bharat.

Later Seljuqs. Malik Shah's successors : Mahmud 1092-94. Malik Shah was the last great Sultan of the Seljuqs. On his death in 1092, he left behind four sons who were all minors. Instigated by their mothers and advisers, a civil war broke out among them and their uncles. The eldest son, named Barkyaruq, was at Isfahan with his mother Zubayda of the royal house of Seljuq. But the youngest son, named Mahmud, was at Baghdad with his mother Turkan Khatun, the favourite wife of Malik Shah and a clever and energetic women. She influenced her dying husband to nominate her son Mahmud as his successor. So, on Malik Shah's death, Mahmud, a mere child of four, was proclaimed Sultan at Baghdad. But his elder brother, Barkyaruq, was proclaimed Sultan at Isfahan by the sons of Nizam-ul-Mulk. A war followed between the brothers, in which Barkyaruq's party was defeated and he was himself captured by Turkan Khatun. Mahmud, however, died soon after his success in 1094, and his rival Barkyaruq was proclaimed Sultan.

Barkyaruq (1094-1104). Barkyaruq was a boy of thirteen when he became Sultan. Turkan Khatun was put to death soon after. His brief reign of ten years was also filled with a civil war with one of his brothers, Muhammad, who was instigated and supported by Muayyid-ul-Mulk, a son of Nizam ul Mulk, whom he had displeased by dismissing him from the premiership. Barkyaruq, however, appointed Sanjar, another brother, as the king of Khurasan in 1096. Sanjar retained this position till he himself became the Sultan of the whole Seljuq Empire in 1118 A. D. At last in 1104, the quarrel between Barkyaruq and his rival brother, Muhammad, was patched up and peace concluded. The Ismaili heretics of Alamut, now a terror of the Empire, threatened the life of the Sultan also. But Barkyaruq died soon after his peace with his brothers and was succeeded by his little son, Malik Shah II, who was easily deposed by his uncle, Muhammad, from the throne.

Muhammad (1105-1118). Muhammad, the rival of Barkyaruq, became the Sultan after his death. His reign was on the whole uneventful, except that he made great efforts to suppress the growing threat of the heretics of Alamut, but unsuccessfuly. On his death, his son, Mahmud, was proclaimed Sultan, though yet a boy of fourteen.

Sanjar (1118-57). Sanjar, who had been the king of Khurasan since the day of Barkyaruq, was attacked by his nephew, Mahmud, who succeeded to the Sultanate after his father's death in Baghdad. Mahmud was defeated by Sanjar. But he was more kindly treated by his uncle than it was the fashion among the Seljuqs, who usually blinded or killed their defeated rivals. Sanjar, on the contrary, made Mahmud the ruler of Iraq. Sanjar became the Sultan and ruled the Empire for about forty years. His reign was the last prosperous and brilliant period of the Seljuqids. However, his reign also witnessed the final disintegration of the Seljuq Empire due to three powerful rivals. Firstly, the Ghori Princes rose into power at Ghazni, which was a vassal kingdom of the Seljuqs. Thus the Kingdom of Ghazni passed out of their hands. But a far more powerful rival rose in Khwarizm under the Kings of Khiva, called Khwarizmshahs. Atsiz, the founder of the dynasty of the Khwarizmshahs, revolted against Sanjar in 1138 A. D. Though defeated, he regained his kingdom of Khwarizm or Khiva again, when Sanjar returned to Merv. In 1141, Sanjar was attacked by a Turkish tribe and defeated. This enabled Atsiz to declare his independence. Sanjar marched against him, in 1142, but failed to take Khwarizm. A treaty was concluded between the two, which recognised the independence of the Khwarizmshahs in 1156. The third event, which proved

most disastrous to the Seljuq Empire and which compelled the aged Sanjar to conclude peace with Khwarizmshahs was the invasion of a powerful Turkish tribe of the Ghuzz. The Seljuqs were also descended from this tribe, but it was then still heathen. They had entered the Empire in 1143, and had captured large parts in Transoxiana. In 1153, the Ghuzz inflicted a disastrous defeat on Sanjar and captured Merv, Tus, Nishapur and Sarrakhs in Khurasan. Sanjar became practically a prisoners in their hands. But he escaped in 1155. He again marched against them, but died of old age and grief in 1156. With his death came to an end the dynasty of the Great Seljuqs and their Empire ceased to exist.

Rise of Khwarizmshahs. Two powerful dynasties arose on the ruins of the Seljuq Empire, viz., the Houses of Ghor and Khwarizmshahs. The Ghori dynasty, however, did not play any part in the affairs of the Abbaside Caliphate, but extended its rule into South Asian sub-continent where it founded the first Muslim Empire. The Khwarizmshahs, on the contrary, played a haughty but reckless role in the concluding tragedy of the Abbaside Caliphate. The Kings of Khwarizm descended from Anushtigin, a cup-bearer of Malik Shah. Atsiz was the first to set up an independent principality at Khwarizm (modern Khiva) during his war with Sanjar, the last of the Great Seljuqs. After him, his descendants further extended the territories of their Kingdom by conquering the rival kings of Ghor, Ghaznah, and the Seljuqid principalities.

One of the Khwarizmshahs, named Takash, (1172-1200) defeated and killed Tughril, the successor of Sanjar. Thus the whole of the Seljuq Empire in Persia passed into the hands of the Khwarizmshahs, in 1194, except the eastern province. Takash gave it to the Caliph an-Nasir, who conferred upon him the title of the ruler of the East. However, soon after relations between the Sultan of the East and the Caliph of Baghdad became strained. Takash was succeeded by his son, named Alaud Din Muhammad Shah, in 1200. During his reign of about twenty years. the Kingdom of Khwarizm reached at its zenith, extending from the Ural Mountains to the Persian Gulf and from the Indus to the Euphrates, excepting the provinces of Fars and Khuzistan. Yet during his reign it was swept away by the catraclysm of the Mongol eruption. For this disaster Muhammad Shah was also partly responsible, because he was a singularly haughty, reckless and even senseless ruler. The relations between him and the Caliph an-Nasir were as usual strained. Muhammad Shah resolved to place an Alide on the Caliphal throne. With this purpose, he marched against the Caliph in 1216. But before he could reach Baghdad, a

snowstorm and an early winter compelled him to retreat in 1217. It is said that the Caliph, who could not fight Muhammad Shah single-handed, invited the Mongol ruler, Changiz Khan, to invade the Kingdom of Khwarizm, which he did next year in 1218. This became the begining of the end of the Khwarizmshahs and also of the Abbaside Caliphate. It also entailed the destruction of something which was far greater than both, viz., the Islamic society and culture of the Abbaside Caliphate.

MONGOL ERUPTION

Rise of the Mongols. Like the Turks, the Mongols were the inhabitants of the vast steppe-lands, stretching from the Jaxartes in Turkestan to the borders of China. They dwelt in the eastern parts of this vast region, now called Mongolia. They were divided into many tribes which, as it was usual in a tribal society, frequently qurarrelled among themselves. But somewhere in the middle of the twelfth century they were united into a single people by one of their tribal chiefs, named Timujin, who later assumed the title of Changiz or Jingiz Khan. As it had always happaned in old Asia, when the quarrelling tribes were unified by a great leader into a single nation, they hurled themselves upon the higher but decadent society of their neighbours and conquered and subdued it, thus starting the nomadic-feudal or Sisyphean cycles, as we have called them. So once again the ages-old story of the Desert versus the Sown, or of the conquest by the Tribal Society of the sedentary, slave, feudal society repeated itself. Soon after unifying his Mongol hordes, Changiz Khan marched against the civilized but moribund empires of China and of the Khwarizmshahs. He conquered the northern parts of the Chinese Empire by the year 1206, and thus extended his Mongol Empire upto the banks of the Jaxartes in Central Asia, where it bordered the Kingdom of Khwarizm.

The tribalist ways of the Mongols or Tatars. Soon after the Mongols, or Tatars, as the Muslim historians called them, burst upon the lands of Islam and devastated them far and wide. There were several reasons for this catastrophic destruction of the Muslim lands and kingdoms. Besides the military leadership of Changiz Khan and his descendants, one supreme reason was their peculiarly tribal style of life and warfare, which gave them several advantages over their enemies. They moved on their waggons, placing the whole paraphernalia of their household on them, which looked like "moving tents". Thus the whole tribe marched to the battlefield. Moreover, they were expert horsemen, having literally lived their whole life on the back of the horse. This way of life gave them great mobility. In this manner the Mongol tribes marched with all their men, women and children

on their "moving tents" or on horseback, along with all their animals, horses, cows, sheep, dogs, and the like, eating their flesh or whatever came in their way. What made the Mongols particularly repulsive to the Muslims were these habits of eating and living. Their method of fighting was also singularly brutal and barbarous. After winning a victory they killed all of their enemies—men women and children, soldiers and peaceful citizens, villagers, and towns-dwellers, the learned or the rustics. They slaughtered all, not because they hated Islam or the Muslims, about whom they knew next to nothing, but because they wanted to strike terror in the hearts of all other enemies, and thus to make them easy victims. The consideration was neither political nor religious, but only military. "The cruelty of the Mongols," writes Dr. Browne, "was calculated and deliberate, designed to strike with a paralysis of terror those whom they proposed next to attack, while they deemed it safer to leave behind their advancing hosts smoking ruins and a reeking charnel-houses rather than risk any movement or revolt on the part of the miserable survivors of their assault." Such was the "scourge of Allah" as the terrorised Muslims called Changiz Khan and his Mongol hordes, who fell, like an avalanche, upon them.

Changiz Khan destroys the Kingdom of Khwarizm 1218-20. The Mongol avalanche upon the Islamic world came in two waves, first under Changiz Khan, during 1218-27, and later under his grandson, Halaku, during 1256-60.

Changiz and the Khwarizmshahs. There are two views why Changiz Khan's Mongol hordes invaded the Kingdom of Khwarizm. Firstly, he was unwisely induced by the Caliph an-Nasir to do so, for the Caliph feared Muhammad Shah's attack on Baghdad. There is not much truth in this view. The second and probably the real reason was the unwise treatment of the Mongol envoys and traders by Muhammad Shah. In 1218 A.D., a party of Mongol traders was put to death by the Khwarizmi governor at Utrar, a frontier-town of Khwarizm with the connivance of the Shah of Khwarizm. When Changiz Khan sent an embassy to demand punishment of the governor, Muhammad Shah replied by killing the envoys. It was a clear breech of international courtesy and dealings. Upon receiving the news of this dastardly act, Changiz Khan summoned a meeting of his royal council, called the *Quriltai* in which it was decided to attack and punish the Shah of Khwarizm. Marching at the head of an army of one lakh and sixty thousand Mongols, Changiz Khan burst over the Kingdom of Khawarism. At this fateful juncture the King of Khwarizm, who had provoked the Mongols by his haughtiness and treachery, showed his weak, irresolute and superstitious character. While city after city of his vast Kingdom

was captured, plundered and burnt to ashes by the Mongols, he fled before them or consulted his astrologers for a propitious hour to fight. In reply to appeals for help and protection, he told his people to defend themselves as best as they could.

Outnumbered by his enemies, Muhammad Shah fled before them, after a battle on the frontier. The Mongols entered Transoxiana, Khurasan and Persia, then full with flourishing cities and opulent towns, which were centres of trade and commerce, culture and learning, for the last several centuries. First they razed Khojand to the ground. Next they burnt Bukhara to ashes, massacring a great number of its inhabitants and dishonouring their women. The mosques of Bukhara, famous as centres of piety and learning, were turned into stables for the Mongol horses. The turn of Samarkand came next which was plundered and its inhabitants killed or enslaved. Muhammad Shah had, in the meanwhile, fled to Nishapur beyond the Oxus. Then the Mongols crossed the Oxus, while Muhammad Shah believed they would not. After crossing the Oxus they captured Herat where they slaughtered 60,000 men, women and children out of a population of 100,000. Balkh was similarly treated with massacre and pillage. Thence Changiz Khan marched upon Khwarizm, the capital of Muhammad Shah, who had as usual deserted it before the approach of the Mongols. The city was captured and its whole population put to the sword. Tirmiz was similarly treated. At Merv, according to Ibn al-Athir, the Mongols killed 700,000 inhabitants. At Nishapur, they massacred the whole population and then built, with the heads of their victims, three pyramids of the heads of men, women and children separately. Everywhere a few men and women who escaped immediate death were tortured and butchered in order to find out hidden wealth or treasure. Once on seeing an old woman swallowing a pearl, the Mongols started the barbarous practice of cutting open the bellies of the corpses to find any pearl or precious stones inside.

In the meantime Muhammad Shah kept running ahead of the invaders. But at last pursued by the Mongols he died on an island in the Caspian Sea. His family was captured by the Mongols, including his haughty mother who had killed all the captive princes of the Houses of Seljuq, Ghor, Ghaznah, etc., imprisoned in Khwarism, before she fled from there. Muhammad Shah's son, named Jalal ud Din Mankoburni, succeeded his father and heriocally fought against the Mongol hordes. Being defeated, he fled towards South Asia, and fought a battle on the banks of the Indus. Again defeated, he fled to South Persia, via Sindh, and died in 1231 A.D., at the hands of a Kurd. Thus ended the line of the Khwarismshahs. However, the flood of Mongol slaughter

and terror flowed on. Rai, Hamadan. Kashan and Dinawar in Persia were sacked. Then the Mongols entered Iraq, where the Caliph Mustansir, grandson of Nasir, and the populace of Baghdad trembled in terror, for the Mongols reached as near Baghdad as Samarra. But they returned without attacking the ancient capital. For the moment it seemed as if it had escaped. But it was only a lull before the storm. With this ended the first wave of the Mongol eruption. It had, however, left the great lands of Medieval Islam, namely Transoxiana, Khurasan, and Persia, in utter ruin and desolation. The invaders had left behind them a trail of blood, smoke and ruined cities. It is said that only one-tenth of the population of Khurasan survived. It became a land of burning cities and uprooted culture and civilisation.

Changiz Khan, the "Scourage of Allah," sent to punish men for their sins, as he described himself, died in 1227. After his death, his son Ogotai became the Overlord of the Mongols. During his reign, Quraqorum was founded as the capital of the ever-expanding Mongol Empire. He sent his brother, Batu, towards Europe, where he captured southern half of Russia, Poland and even entered Prussia (Germany). But the death of the Mongol chief saved Europe from being overwhelmed by the Mongols. During this time, however, the Muslim world enjoyed a temporary respite from Mongol inroads. After Ogotai's death in 1245, the Mongol Qurilitai or general council, chose his nephew, Mangu Khan, as the next emperor. Few years later, Mangu Khan despatched his brothers, Qubilai, against South China and Halaku against the Abbaside Caliphate. This leads us to the last bloody drama in the gruesome story of the Mongols and the final tragedy in the long history of the Abbasides.

FALL OF BAGHDAD

Halaku's Invasion : 1253-58. With Halaku, the grandson of Changiz Khan, began the second wave of the Mongol invasion. He entered Khurasan in 1253 A. D. But he first turned his forces against the Ismaili heretics of Alamut. They were, as we have already seen, destroyed root and branch. Then he turned towards Baghdad, where Mustasim sat on the Caliphal throne.

Al-Mustasim b'Illah 1242-58 : the Last of the Abbasides. When Mustansir died in 1242, he was succeeded by his son, Abu Ahmad Abdullah, with the title of al-Mustasim b'Illah. He was however a Caliph of a very shrunken kingdom, which did not extend much beyond the environs of Baghdad. Mustasim was a weak, vacillating and inept ruler, who had neither the resources nor the character to retain his little kingdom. He was confronted with an enemy who commanded almost limitless resources of an

Empire which extended from China to Poland, rightly regarded as the greatest in world-history. Over and above all this, old Baghdad was torn by ancient jealousies and fanaticisms. The Shias and the Sunnis attacked and killed each other in their endless disputes and riots in the streets and quarters of Baghdad, oblivious to the impending catastrophe which was soon to bury them all under its bloody avalanche. The Caliph had neither a courageous heart nor an intelligent head to stop this internecine bloodshed. Once the Shia quarter of Karakh in Baghdad was burnt down by a Sunni mob, which grieved the Wazir of the Caliph, named Ibn'l-Alqami, who was a Shia. According to Muslim historians, like Ibn Khaldun, Abu'l Fida, the Wazir invited Halaku to attack Baghdad. But, really, Halaku needed no such invitation, for he had already resolved to do so.

While engaged in suppressing the Ismaili heretics of Alamut, Halaku had written to Mustasim to send his troops to help the Mongols in crushing the heretics. But his letter remained unanswered. After crushing the Ismailians, Halaku advanced upon Hamadan, which became his base for operations against Baghdad, intent as he was to crush the Caliphate once and for all. From Hamadan he sent an ultimatum to the Caliph to demolish the walls of Baghdad and surrender it to him. He upbraided him for not supporting his campaign against the heretics. The Caliph hesitated and sent an evasive reply. In November, 1257 A.D., Halaku advanced upon Baghdad from two directions. He himself advanced with the bulk of the army, nearly 80,000 strong, directly upon the doomed capital, while a smaller force of about 30,000 strong attacked it from the west via Mosul. Against it, the Caliph could muster a force of only 20,000 men. In the first engagement at Tekrit, the little army of the Caliph was defeated. It fell back upon Baghdad, which was besieged by the Mongols at the end of December, 1257 A.D.

Seige of Baghdad : January 1258/Muharram 656 A.H. The seiege of Baghdad lasted for forty days, from the end of December, 1257 to the beginning of February, 1258. The Mongols planted their heavy artillery of mangonels and other siege engines on the hills and lofty edifices around the walls of Baghdad and poured stones and burning naphtha-balls into the unfortunate city. By breaching the canals, its supply of water was also cut off. At last, after a month the wall was breached and the Mongol hordes burst into it and started a general slaughter of its defenceless citizens. In the meanwhile, the Caliph, distracted and despairing of success, opened a parley with the Mongol savages, but to no avail. Then, attended by his sons, brother, officials, and notables, in all about 300 men, he went to the camp of Halaku. Three days after, Mustasism and all his sons, brother, officials and notables who

accompanied him, were cold-bloodedly butchered by the Mongols.

Sack of Baghdad : With the departure of the Caliph, the Mongols commenced the sack of the city and the massacre of its inhabitants. Men, women and children were slaughtered in the streets, houses, mosques, schools, shrines, tombs, and everywhere and anywhere they endeavoured to escape or hide from the furious Mongol soldiery. Palaces, colleges, mosques, schools, tombs and mausolea were all burnt and razed to the ground. Libraries, filled with books on sciences, religion and arts, colleges and schools filled with the teachers and the taught and hospitals filled with patients, were put to fire and turned into heaps of ashes. "The accumulated treasures of five centuries were thus for ever lost to humanity, and the flower of the nation was completely destroyed." The horrors of rapine, pillage and slaughter lasted for six weeks. At the end of it, Baghdad was one vast heap of ruins and ashes. According to Ibn Khaldun, out of 20 lakh inhabitants, 16 lakhs of them were butchered to death, drowned in the Tigris or slaughtered outside the walls of the city in the quagmires made by the flod. Ameer Ali rightly says, "With the destruction of Baghdad, the gloom of night settled on Western Asia."

Final check to the Mongols. After the fall of Baghdad, Halaku marched on Syria, where he similarly spread his slaughter and pillage in the cities of Aleppo, Hims, Harran and Nasibeen. It appeared as if the Western lands of Islam would also meet the same cruel fate as the Eastern. But the death of Mangu, the Great Khan, compelled Halaku to return to Persia. The army which he left behind was utterly defeated by the Egyptian Mamluk general, Baybars, at Ayn Jalut, in September, 1260. Later Halaku himself marched on Syria again and tried to join hands with the Crusaders in order to crush Islam between his paganism and Christianity. But his attempt at the conquest of Syria and Christian alliance failed. He finally returned to Persia where he founded a Mongol dynasty of the Il-Khans, as it was styled which lasted from 1255 to 1304. Its rulers were at first Buddhists, then they hobnobbed with Christianity and finally the seventh Il-Khan, Ghazan Khan (1295-1304), became a Muslim, followed by his Mongols in Persia as well. The Persianised Mongols came to be called the Mughals, especially in the South Asian History.

With the fall of Baghdad came to an end the history of the Abbaside Caliphate. Two questions arise here : what were the causes and what were the consequences of the down fall of the Abbaside Caliphate. They are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 26

CAUSES OF THE FALL OF THE ABBASIDE CALIPHATE

The Abbaside Caliphate existed for about five centuries, though with greatly varying fortunes. The causes of its downfall, therefore, can be traced through several centuries and in a variety of forms. They are, broadly speaking, political, social, moral, religious, economic, financial, intellectual and cultural.

Political Causes. The disintegration of the Abbaside Empire began from the reign of Mutawakkil and his successors due to the gradual decay of the central government at Baghdad. The Caliphs became indolent, inefficient, negligent, pleasure-loving and luxurious. Their weakness encouraged their governors to become independent, owing only nominal allegiance to the Caliph at Baghdad. The Wazirs and later the Ameer ul Umra and the Sultans deprived the Caliphs of all political power and authority, reducing them to mere figureheads to perform the spiritual functions of the Pontiffs of Islam. In this form of suspended spiritual animation the Caliphs continued till Halaku Khan rolled up al-Mustasim, the last of the Abbasides, in a carpet, and beat him to death with clubs.

Their Failure to meet the Challenge of their Times. With the disintegration of the Abbaside Empire, innumerable kingdoms and principalities arose all over it, due to the ambitions of the governors and generals, courtiers and nobles, adventurers, reformers and even robbers and the lack of leadership by the Central Government at Baghdad. This process of disintegration went even further. Each kingdom further split up into still smaller kingdoms and principalities. In fact, a state became an estate, no bigger than a town or a narrow valley. This fact, aptly described as Tawwaif ul Muluki, the anarchy of the princes, created political anarchy and chaos of the worst type. It invited ever greater disasters, of which the Mongol eruption was the greatest, though not the first. It was due to the inability of these rulers and governments to meet the challenge of the internal problems and enternal dangers.

Utter lack of political leadership. The unending process of disintegration of the Empires and kingdoms of the Abbassides, the Seljuqs,the Ayyubids, the Ghaznavids, the Khwarizmshahs and many others reveal one grim weakness of the body politic of Medieval Islam. It was their utter lack of political leadership,

which alone could create conditions of peace, order and stability, no matter what was the geographical size of a particular kingdom or empire. Neither the huge empires of the Umayyads and the Abbasides, nor the comparatively smaller empires of the Seljuqs, the Fatimids or the Ayyubids, not to mention the petty kingdoms and statelets which mushroomed into empheral existence all over the Muslim world, had any political continuity, consistency and stability of size and shape. They lacked centralised political leadership. Instead of it, all of them, big or small, magnificent or paltry, split up into many shapes with bewildering speed and variety. The reason was that the rise of empires, kingdoms and statelets depended upon the energy, ability and military and administrative skill of their founders and their tribal or feudal elite groups for two or three generations. Then their successors among ruling and feudal classes lost all ability, and skill to rule. In all not a single state of Medieval Islam lasted more than a century, while many of them vanished in a shorter span of forty or fifty years. Such was the political, social, and economic malady of the nomadic-feudal cycles of the Muslim society and polity during the Abbaside and later periods of Islamic history, as we have analysed in an earlier chapter.

Islamic Polity became stationary and despotic. The Abbaside Caliphate did not further develop the free and consultative institutions which existed under the Orthodox Caliphs and even during the rule of some Umayyad Caliphs, like Muawiyah and Umar II. There seems to be only one exception to this rule, viz., the caliphate of Mamun, who established a Council of State. But throughout the long history of the Abbasides we find no political institutions which might have helped the Caliph in the business of the state as equally necessary constitutional bodies, as existed in contemporary Europe such as the Grand Councils of the feudal lords and prelates. The Abbasides even discarded the earlier precedent of the Majlis-e-Shura of the early Caliphate. So the Islamic State under them became more and more autocratic, despotic and stagnant. It never advanced beyond the level of autocratic despotism of an absolutist Sultan or king. "The type and exemplar of Muslim rule," writes Muir, "is the absolute and autocratic monarch alternating at times with the licence of lawless soldiery. The only check upon the despot is the law of the Koran, expounded by the learned, and enforced by the sentiment, or it may be by the uprising, of the nation."

No respect for law. Among the peoples of the Abbaside Caliphate, there was no respect for law, which means no respect for the rules guaranteeing security of life, liberty, property and

honour of others. The rulers, their officials, soldires and petty functionaries were ever ready to violate the laws and principles of administration which they had themselves laid down. Political authority and law were arbitrary and temporary, depending not on impersonal principles of justice and reason but on the strictly personal likes or dislikes of the rulers and administrators. Whenever a new caliphate, sultanate or kingdom came into being, its first two or three good and strong rulers adhered to laws or rules of good government. But with the inevitable decline, lawlessness and licence began once again. Indeed, the situation deteriorated, for every new and smaller sultan or king was more lawless than the earlier and greater ones. The popular attitude towards this vicious tendency was one of passivity, fatalism, or at worst, one of equally lawless revolts and importent retaliation by savage plundering of peaceful towns and populations, as was the case with the revolts of the Persian heresiarchs, the Zanji Revolt or the Carmathian depredations. In short, none of the social classes, upper, or lower, ever showed a capacity for political leadership and good government. They passively followed, like dumb and mute cattle, the autocratic rulers and despotic conquerors, who had tribesmen and soldiers enough to create temporary conditions of peace and order.

SOCIAL AND MORAL CAUSES

A chaotic and fragmented kinship society. The Abbaside society was a society of kinship groups, such as tribes, clans, local brotherhood, isnaf or trade or craft brotherhoods or guilds and family groups. It did not possess any unity or uniformity of culture and civilisation, or to use the present-day jargon, a single way of life. It was, indeed, a medely of different, even divergent, patterns and trends of social life and systems. Tribal society and customs prevailed in the deserts of Arabia, Iraq, Syria and North Africa, and in the barren hills and mounsain-valleys of Persia and Khurasan and Central Asia. Feudal society existed in fertile valleys and plains in Iraq, Persia, Khurasan, etc., while slavery existed almost everywhere and in all walks of life. The interests, beliefs, customs, attitudes and modes behaviour and conduct of the tribal people differed from those of the sedentary feudal villages and velleys and also from the equally sedentary mercantile communities of the towns and cities. In the earlier and more prosperous period of the Abbaside history there was a definite tendency towards the growth of new towns and cities and villages. More and more lands were brought under the plough by reclaiming marshy swamps and digging canals in Iraq, Persia, Khurasan, Egypt, and other provinces. But when the decline and lawlessness commenced, the sown and settled areas of the Muslim world began

to shrink once again and the deserts to expand, bringing the former tribal society aad nomadic peoples with them. Thus the Turkish tribes in the east, the Arab Bedouins in Egypt and North Africa and the Berber tribes in North Africa, burst over the sedentary and flourishing towns and cities of the decadent Muslim world. They joined in devastating it, along with its non-Muslim enemies, like the Christian Crusaders from the West and the Mongols from the East. All these enemies, both internal and foreign, destroyed and turned into heaps of ruins innumberable towns and cities, which were the centres of Islamic civilisation and culture. Thus, at the end of the Abbaside period, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Khurasan and other provinces regressed into nomadism and tribalism of the earlier ages. The progress of Islamic society came to a stand-still ever after.

Degradation of Muslim Women in the Abbaside society : Chaos and fragmentation penetrated into the homes and hearths and even hearts, of the peoples of the Abbaside Caliphate. They did not possess an ordered and organised family and communal life. On the contrary, their family organisation and communal system had equally chaotic and conflicting tendencies. This was due to such institutions as polygamy, slave-concubinage, the institution of harem, purdah and the like. These institutions existed among all levels of Islamic society i.e., among the ruling families, the feudal nobility, the official classes, among the soldiers, commanders, merchants, traders, tribal chiefs, nomads and town-dwellers. At least, in this respect, there was a social and cultural uniformity. But it was the uniformity of a graveyard. It produced disastrous effects on the social life. Polygamy, purdah and servile concubinage constantly threatened and even broke up the unity of the household. They tempered with the ties of the family life and affections. And they sapped the vigour of the upper and the middle classes, the elite classes, who were the political, military and social leaders of the Medieval Islam. This was one of the reasons why the Abbaside state and society so grieviously lacked political and social leadership.

In a feudal and settled society, family plays an essential role in the continuity and development of a people's culture and civilisation, which it transmits from one generation to the next. In this task women as wives and mothers, play a vital role. Women are, indeed, the custodians of a nation's culture and of its transmission to the new generations. As wives, they diffuse it from one family to another, and as mothers, they transmit it from one generation to another. The social and domestic institutions, such as polygamy, slave-concubinage, husband-determined divorce, the Harem and Purdah played havoc with these vital and socially necessary functions of the women folk in the Abbaside society.

It may be remarked here, that family system does not play much role in the nomadic tribal society, where social and cultural transmission takes place in the wider clan or tribal life. Whatever little culture and civilisation a tribal society has is transmitted by a necessarily free and collective life of the clan or the tribe. Family is purely a procreational association and not a social unit of the transmission of culture and civilisation. But in the settled and more advanced social life in the feudal villages and mercantile communities of towns and cities, family becomes a vital social unit. Though other agencies of social and cultural transmission, such as schools, pulpits, markets, guilds and castes, also came into being in the feudal and mercantile societies of the Middle Ages. But they still played a secondary and subordinate role to the primary social units of the family and other kinship associations. However, to perform its vital social functions properly, family must be based on monogamy and must be free from all disrupting factors like arbitrary divorce, concubinage, etc. It must ensure a life of respect, dignity and happiness for the women as wives and mothers. But no such conditions existed in the Abbaside society, in which polygamy, slave concubinage and arbitrary divorce, etc., were prevalent. The Ulema interpreted Islamic teachings in such a manner as to sanction and sanctify these anti-social institutions and thus made them an integral part of Islam. Though some of the Ulema, especially of the Mutazila school and the Ikhwan as-Saffa, condemned these institutions as not inherent to Islam, their voice was soon drowned by the fanaticism and political dominance of the more orthodox ones. Hence Islamic society could never free itself from them. The result was that Islamic society of the middle Ages became static, retrogressive, stagnant, chaotic and disorganised in those very fields of national life which make for progress, prosperity and power. This was also the reason why no achievements in economy, culture and politics could be continued beyond two or three generations, as we have explained in a previous chapter.

Degenerative Family and Slave Systems. The institutions of the servile concubinage, the Ghilman, the eunuch, the polygamy, the harem, etc., had deleterious effects on the character and moral conduct of the people. As Hitti writes, "The large harems, made possible by the countless number of eunuchs ; the girl and the boy slaves (ghilman), who contributed most to the degradation of womanhood and the degeneration of manhood ; the unlimited concubines and the numberless half-brothers and half-sisters in the imperial household with their unavoidable jealousies and intrigues ; the luxurious scale of high living with the emphasis on wine and song—all these and other similar forces sapped the vitality of family life and inevitably produced the persistently feeble heirs to the throne." And not

only of the heirs to the thrones. We need only add here that what was true of the royal household was equally true of the feudal nobles, officials and soldiers, merchants, traders and tribal chiefs and common people. As to the female slavery, its effects were far more injurious for the master of the slave-girl than on herself. "However much", writes Muir, "domestic slavery is ameliorated by the kindly influences which in Muslim lands surround it, still the licence of servile concubinage fixes its withering grasp with more damaging effect on the owner of the slave than on the slave hereself." Other social evils also crept in to sap the vitality and the spirit of adventure and initiative of the Muslims of the later Abbaside period. In this way they produced the moral and physical softening which led to the collapse of the Abbaside Caliphate and of all other "successor states" which came after its decline and decay. These evils were the growing luxury in food, dress and dwelling. The early Muslims were hardy nomads and desert-dwellers, but the Abbaside Muslims became pleasure and luxury-loving town-dwellers. The only thing which saved the Abbaside Empire from an early collapse was the repeated infusion of new blood either by conversion or by the invasion and inclusion of foreign tribes, e.g., the Persians, the Turks, the Berbers, and the like. But they too succumbed to the degenerative influences of the palygyny, concubinage, harim, as did their predecessors. Thus the moral and social life and conduct of the Abbaside peoples deteriorated and degenerated and thus caused the four-generation cycle of their political decline and downfall.

Religious cases : Middle Ages were religious ages. Religion dominated all aspects of medieval life. Hence the need for religious unity and uniformity was absolutely essential in the Middle Ages than, say, in modern times. But it was exactly in matters of religion that the Abbaside period presented a dismal picture of disunity, dissension, disputes and wars. In the early stages, Muslims had religious unity among them. But as time passed, especially as the Abbaside period advanced, they were more and more split into different and antagonistic sects and groups. All sorts of religious differences arose and Islam divided into many sects, which often disputed and fought with each other. Thus began the Shia-Suni clashes, and the clandestine war which the Extremist Shias, the Ismailians, waged upon all other Muslims, Sunni or Shia of the moderate sects. The Kharijis were already in revolt when the Abbaside came to power. But they were now joined by equally fanatical and revolutionary religious sects, such as the Carmathians and the Assassins. At the same time, the Sunnis were divided into quarrelling groups of the Hanbalis, the Hanafis, etc. Thus Medieval Islam lost all unity and uniformity of dogma and practice. Unending theologi-

cal disputes torn its unity of faith and precept.

What were the causes of the religious disunity and disputes? A few of them may be mentioned here. The basic cause was the lack of a well-known and established religious leadership. It was due to the inability of the early Muslims to separate religion from politics. Matters religious and political were hopelessly confused by them. The institution of the caliphate, for instance, was at once religious and political. The caliph was both a pope and a king rolled into one. Thus the purely political dispute regarding the election of a caliph inevitably became a fertile source of religious disputes, because the two were so inseparably linked together. Consequently, every political dispute in early and medieval Islam became a cause of religious quarrels and dissensions. Had there been a separate religious institution and leadership, it would have preserved religious unity and discipline amidst growing political disintegrations and quarrels.

Second cause of religious disunity was the lack of missionary zeal among the early Muslims. Though they were very good Muslims and were deeply religious in outlook and conduct, yet they did not realise the social implications of their faith, and its spirit of universality, or its universal message. They utterly neglected the supreme task of converting the millions of non-Muslims in the far-flung empire by means of missionary work and propaganda among them, as the Christians were doing in the length and breath of Germanic Europe almost in those very centuries when the early Muslims had conquered their vast empire from Sind to Spain. Instead, they allowed all souts of religions to exist in their empire without inviting them in an organised manner to accept the new faith. The result was that these non-Muslims were reduced to the level of second or third class citizens, instead of being enrolled as first class equal citizens from the very beginning of Islamic history. And when conversions came afterwards, they became a source of troubles of all kinds, because every new convert brought into the fold of Islam his former religious attitudes and inclinations, even his superstitions and aberrations. Had these converts been proselytised by a well-organised missionary system, working under a single and centralised leadership, they would have been purified of their earlier religious beliefs and would have imbibed the true spirit of Islam. But they, so to say, drifted into Islam, and adopted it with all their previous aberrations and predilictions of dogma and practice. Thus they introduced into it all sorts of religious doubts and disputes.

Moreover, as these conversions were made under the influence of national grievances of the Persians, the Berbers and other

peoples and races, they also added racial and nationalistic rivalries and disputes into the religious and theological disputes and dissensions. These racial and nationalistic rivalries enabled the heterodox parties and groups to sow the seeds of religious disunity by winning the support of the new converts to Islam. This is the story of the Persian heresiarchs, the Ismailian propagandists, and the Fatimids, the Carmathians and the Assassins, and the Khariji successes among the Berbers, and so on. The Caliphs, their governors and officials and the sultans and kings, who were also religious leaders, were more inclined to safeguard their political interests than to fulfil their religious duty to spread Islam among their non-Muslim subjects. Thus we witnessed a sad picture of internal disputes between the Arabs and non-Arabs, between Arab Muslims and the Non-Arab Muslims, between the Muslims and the Dhimmis. To this were added racial and national rivalries of the Arabs, the Persians, the Turks, the Berbers and other races and peoples who dwelt in the Muslim Empire or immigrated into it afterwards, Their racial and national or kinship rivalries assumed religious differances and opposition with each looking back to its past glories in the garb of the new Islamic sectarian jargon. No consciousness of religious unity knit them into a homogeneous people. Thus the various sects of Islam reflected their political and social disunity and divergences. In other words, religion also contributed greatly to the chaos and fragmentation of the Abbaside society and polity, which became the most important cause of its downfall and extinction. "Islam was" writes Hitti, "no more able to unite its devotees into a corporate whole than was the caliphate to incorporate the lands of the Mediterranean with those of Central Asia into a stable unit"

Dominance of the obscurantist and anti rationalist Ulema : In the later half of the Abbaside period the Orthodox school of Muslim theology headed by the Hanbalis among the Traditionalists and the Asharites among the scholastics and theologians, became dominant in politics, religion and society. After Imam Ghazali's death in 1111 A.D., the Orthodox Ulema renounced completely their earlier critical spirit of free enquiry and assumed a dogmatic and obscurantist attitude towards all problems of Islamic law, religion and dogma. They condemned the spirit of free enquiry in the interpretation of Islam and its teachings. They justified the persecution of the schools of the Mutazila, the Ikhwan as-Safa and others who sought to discover the true spirit of Islam in the changing circumstances of time and place. They upheld and sanctified the social, political and economic institutions, existing in the earlier periods of Islamic history and denied that new ones could arise under the dispensation of Islam. Thus they became the main causes of making Islamic society and state as stagnant, retrogressive, decadent and immobile. They made

the Muslims passive, backward-looking, fatalistic and obscurantistic. Under such conditions arose the Mulla, that is a Muslim learned in the dogmas of Islam without understanding the changes in the Islamic life and society. Thus arose the Ulema class with its narrow-minded obscurantism, fanaticism and its inherent inability to meet the dangers and solve the problems of the Muslim societies and states which arose on the ashes of the Abbaside Caliphate.

Economic and financial causes. During the earlier period of their history, the Abbasides created conditions of peace and prosperity, by bringing large tracts in Iraq and other provinces under the plough. Marshes were drained. Canals were repeired and new ones dug. Thus agriculture was promoted. Trade and commerce flourished. Industry and agriculture were encouraged even on large capitalist basis by the employment of large numbers of slaves both in mines, manufactories and on the farms. But when the period of decline began from the reign of Mutawakkil onwards, the decay of economic enterprise and initiative also commenced. This decay was caused by many factors. They were the increasing degeneration by polygamous and conicubinal family system of the caliphs, their officials and commanders, on the one hand and their increasing luxuries and pleasures, on the other. All this necessitated increased taxation and extortions from the lower classes. The growing influence of the Turkish soldiery compelled the rulers to increase taxes in order to satisfy them. The increasing decline and disintegration of the Empire disrupted the conditions of peace and security in which alone industrial, commercial and agricultural operations could be profitably undertaken.

The increase in the struggles and wars between all sorts of rebels, adventurers, invaders and conquerors killed many common peoples and ruined many villages, towns and cities, which could not be rehabilitated in their former conditions of enterprise, energy and prosperity. The prosperity of the Empire depended upon the common peasants, workers and traders, who suffered constantly from the marching armies, greedy soldiery and officialdom and ever-changing rulers. So the political anarchy, social chaos and religious quarrels prevented the proper and continuous development of trade, industry and agriculture. On the other hand, the increasing impoverishment and economic misery, in its turn, increased religious quarrels and political rivalries of the various parties, sects and national or kinship groups, tribes and towns. Thus began the vicious circle of economic misery and impoverishment, religious disputes and political anarchy which, by their cumulative effect, ultimately ruined the Abbaside Empire and its successor states.

Owing to these reasons, the rulers were unable to control

distant provinces and regions. They started the practice of farming them out to greedy officials on the condition of providing a fixed sum of income. These tax-farmers were provincial governors, princes and officials. They fleeced the peasantry and trading classes by levying excessive taxes and other imposts in order to fill their pockets. Customs duties and tolls were levied everywhere, which ground down the merchants and the common people and obstructed the flow of trade and commerce. The result was that while the ruling classes became richer, the peasants and the common people, who were already poor, became poorer. Lastly, the frequent occurrence of famines, epidemics, pestilence, floods and such other calamities added their share to the increasing economic chaos and decay of the Abbaside Empire. For instance, no less than forty great epidemics occurred during the first four centuries of the Abbaside period. The floods and famines were themselves proofs of the growing social and economic decay. They were both the causes and effects of the degeneration, anarchy and decay which crept into the life and society of the Abbaside and successor kingdoms and empires of Medieval Islam.

Decadent feudalism. Nothing illustrates better the causes of the decline and all of the Abbaside state and society than the decadence and stagnation of their feudal system. The Abbasides had inherited a rudimentary form of feudalism from their Umayyad predecessors. They developed it to some extent by means of creating conditions of a firm administration in their provinces. They even introduced slave labour by employing large numbers of the Negro slaves, the Zanj. But this proved to be a retrogressive step, because it replaced the free peasantry by the Zanji slaves. It had its disastrous consequences in the terrible Slave Revolt of the Zanj, soon to be followed by those of the Carmathianas. It led to a period of confusion and decay till the advent of the Seljuq Sultans.

The Saljuqs re-organised feudalism on the basis of *iqta* or military fiefs, which brought the Seljuqi feudalism very near to, though not identical with, the dynamic feudalism of the contemporary Western Europe. This was the achievement of Nizam-ul-Mulk, the great minister of Sultan Malik Shah. Owing to the anarchy of the preceding era, and the difficulty of collecting taxes and revenues through paid officials in the provinces, Nizam-ul-Mulk granted lands to the officers on the condition of providing a stipulated number of armed men to the Sultan's armies. Every feudal grantee collected the taxes and the revenues of his *iqta* or fief. He supplied not money but soldiers to the Sultan. As he kept the revenues to himself, he was interested in preserving peace and promoting the agricultural yield of his fief.

But the Seljuqi feudalism failed to develop into a full-fledged manorial feudalism of the later medieval Europe. For this several factors were responsible. Firstly, the inevitable process of four-generation decay and decline of the Seljuqi Empire caused it not to last long and provide conditions of peace and stability over a fairly long period of time. This process of decay prevailed also in every Seljuqi fief. Some of the big fief-holders were ready to take advantage of the growing political weakness and disorder to turn their fiefs into independent or semi-independent states and statelets. But the basic cause was the inability of the big and small fief-holders to exploit properly and harness the economic resources and income of their fiefs. In contemporary Europe, a manor was a well-organised economic unit, in which the labour of the serfs and peasants was harnessed into greater productivity. Thus the lord of the manor enriched himself by increasing the economic resources and exploitation of his manor. But not so the fief holders in the Abbaside East. They did not hold a fief in perpetuity. They did not develop the economic resources of their estates. They did not introduce new implements and methods of cultivation or agriculture. They even did not reside on their fiefs but at the capital or in the provincial town. They were interested only in extorting as much of their share in the harvest or the produce as possible, leaving only bare subsistence to the unfortunate peasants. These were the reasons why feuadalism in the Abbaside Caliphate failed to progress beyond its military form. And this remained true of the Ottoman and other Muslim feudal systems of later Islamic history.

Intellectual decay. The afflorescence of intellect, *i. e.*, of science, philosophy and arts of the early Abbaside period ended with the Seljuqs. Political anarchy, social decay, economic improverishment, religious quarrels, fanaticism and conformism, and the growing hold of the obscurantist and anti-rationalist orthodoxy and the 'mullaism' of the ulema produced benumbing effects on the mind and intellect of the peoples of the later Abbaside period. Indeed, creative thought and independent research ceased altogether. Free enquiry and reason were condemned by the theologians, the sufis and rulers. Conformism or dependence on authority became supreme among them. Originality in thought and imagination vanished. Schalors, writers, philosophers and the learned ceased to think new thoughts, make new theories and philosophies or venture into new paths of knowledge and discovery. Instead of it, old thoughts, beliefs and methods were piously repeated and slavishly imitated, as the real proof and criterion of learning. The number of both writers and readers declined. This intellectual decay was both the cause and effect of the static society and state of the later

Abbaside period. And "when a people cease to see visions, they perish."

Consequences of the fall of the Abbaside Caliphate. The decline and fall of the Abbaside Caliphate is the most important event in the history of Islam. It was, indeed, a watershed in Islamic history. It produced far-reaching consequences on the subsequent ages.

End of Arab hegemony. The fall of the Abbasides put an end to the hegemony of the Arabs in the world of Islam, which they had enjoyed since the days of the Orthodox Caliphs. Throughout the Abbaside period, the Arabs were gradually but irresistibly receding into their former desert environment. But they still held a large place in the Islamic world. With the fall of the Abbasides, the Arabs lost their hegemony completely and irretrievably. Even the Arabo-Persian alliance which characterised the Abbaside Caliphate, was now shattered. The Arabs and the Persians began to tread different and even divergent paths. Persia finally regained her national identity in statehood, culture, language and even religion. The place of the Arabs or of the Arabo-Persians was then taken by the Turks, after a brief Mongol interlude. The Turks became the masters of the Muslim world both in the east and in the west. The Arabs of Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Arabia became the subjects of the Turkish Mamluks or Ottoman Sultans. Had the Arabo-Persian integration of the Abbaside Caliphate lasted, the history of the Muslim peoples would have been quite different.

End of the Caliphate. With the fall of the Abbasides the real history of the Caliphate also came to an end. Although the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt resuscitated a sort of a "Shadow Caliphate" of the Abbasides, but the so-called Abbaside Caliphs of Egypt were mere puppet-courtiers of the Mamluk Sultans. Even the transference of the "caliphate" to the Ottoman Sultans in the 16th century was for all purposes and intents a meaningless episode. With the end of real caliphate vanished also the spiritual headship of Islam. Spiritually, as well as politically, Islamic world was irretrievably divided into several parts.

End of Arabic as a language of science and philosophy : In the intellectual world, the fall of the Abbasides put an end to the Arabic language as a language of science, philosophy, arts and administration as it had become since the day of Abdul Malik, the Umayyad Caliph, and more so under the great Caliphs of the Abbasides. After the fall of Baghdad, Arabic survived only as the language of Islamic law, jurisprudence, theology and religion, as a "sacred language" of Islam. In its place rose Persian and

Turkish and other languages became languages of administration and literature in their respective regions in the East and the West of the Islamic world. But owing to the decline of intellect and thought, they did not become the languages of science and learning. Thus Arabic, Persian, Turkish and other languages of the Muslim peoples remained static and petrified in their medieval mould down to the present days, as fossils of a static and stagnant society and intellect.

Turks as defenders of Islam : As first the Arabs were the propagators and defenders of Islam. Then the Persians shared this honour with them. But after the fall of the Caliphate, the Turks alone remained as the defenders of Islam in the Ottoman Empire, and in the East. They propagated Islam by conquerring new lands in Asia Minor, and the Byzantine Empire and founded new empires and kingdoms in the Muslim east and west.

Peripheral Expansion of Medieval Islam : The fall of the Abbaside Caliphate was, however, followed by the expansion of Islam into the new lands and territories on the periphery of the Abbaside Caliphate, while the original lands of Islam, the central provinces of the Abbaside Caliphate, such as Iraq, Syria, Arabia, Persia, etc,, sank into such a decay and stagnation that remained unbroken till the modern times. It was a phenomenon like that of the trunk of a tree which becomes dry and hollow within but remains green and growing outside. As we have explained in our Sisyphean theory of Medieval Islamic civilisation and culture, it was due to the degenerative effects of the polygamous and concubinal family system of the Medieval Muslims and of the institution of slavery among them, and due to the disintegrative role of their kinship society, which sapped the energy and power of resilience of the older Muslim peoples. The new nomadic invaders and conquerors, e g., the Mongols, Tatars, Turcomans, Berbers and others, were still unaffected by these degenerative and disintegrative influences, at least, during the lifetime of the first two or three generations after their advent to power. It was their energy and enterprising spirit that expanded Islam into the new lands and countries in the South Asian sub-continent, in the east, the Eurasian steppelands in the north and the sub-Saharan Africa in the south.

Repetition of Abbaside history and culture. Even the peripheral growth of the post-Abbaside Muslim peoples did not reveal any new development and progress. Islamic world really became static, immobile and stagnant, so for as fields of human endeavour and achievements in science, learning, arts and culture were concerned. Religious conformism, intellectual lethargy and backwardness, lack of creative thought and research, which had crept

into Muslim mind and intellect at the end of the Abbaside history due to the degenerative effects of their family system and slavery and the disintegrative effects of their kinship relations and interests, characterised all other Muslim peoples in all subsequent ages. Philosophy, science, arts and intellect ceased to progress among them after the halcyon days of the early Abbaside Caliphs or of their Buwayhid, Fatimid and Seljuq successors. On the contrary, the post-Abbaside societies and states of the Mamluk Sultans and Ottoman Turks in the West, the Persian dynasties in Persia or the Delhi Sultans and Mughal Emperors of India achieved nothing in science philosophy and arts. An intellectual gloom descended on the Islamic world, which is unbroken even today. Modern Islam is more or less the Islam as the Abbaside Ulema *i.e.*, theological writers and thinkers and preachers had thought, taught and interpreted. The Islamic history of the post-Abbaside period was merely a repetition of the Abbaside history over and over again, now in Egypt of the Mamluks, now in Asia Minor of the Ottomans and now in India of the Mughals, till the European conquerors came and harnessed the Islamic world to their forms of Imperialisms.

Chapter 27

CENTRAL AND PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE ABBASIDES

THE CALIPH

The form of the Abbaside government was an absolute monarchy. At the head of the State stood the Caliph or Khalifa, who, in theory at least, exercised absolute powers: he was the head of the state, the defender of the faith, the dispenser of juslice, the leader in prayer, the supreme commander and the supreme conferer of all titles and honours. But in practice, the authority of the Abbaside Caliphs was not so unrestricted. As they had come into power on the crest of a religious wave to install Islam and the Tradition of the Holy Prophet, the Abbaside Caliphs exercised their powers within the limits set by the Shariat or the cononical Islamic Law. From the very outset, they emphasised the religious aspect of their power.

Accession. In spite of their adherence to the religious sanction, the Abbaside Caliphs did not revive the principle of the election of the Orthodox Caliphate. Instead they continued the principle of nomination, as introduced by their rivals. the Umayyads. The reigning Caliph nominated one of his close relatives—a son, a brother, a nephew or a cousin—as his successor. Nevertheless, the principle of election was still to be found in the institution of "bayt". When a new Caliph ascended the throne, a ceremony was held in which all the princes of the royal blood, followed by the viziers, officials, nobles and other people took an oath of allegiance at the hands of the new Caliph. This was the "bayt", which was regarded as the expression of the consent of the people to the accession of the new Caliph. It was called the "Ijma'a al-Ummat"—the consensus of the community, which gave divine sanction to the accession of the caliph, the basis of his legitimate authority in temporal government and spiritual headship of Islam.

The earlier Abbaside Caliphs often nominated two successors, after the fashion of the Marwanid Umayyads. But it caused great trouble at the time of succession to the throne. For instance, Saffah nominated Mansur and Isa bin Musa as his successors. But Isa bin Musa never ascended the throne, for he was persuaded to postpone his accession and then forced to renounce it altogether in favour of Mahdi's sons, Hadi and Harun. Harun also

nominated his sons, Amin, and Mamun as his successors, which led to a civil war between the two. So there was no fixed and well-defined law of succession among the Abbasides. Even the sons of the reigning Caliph did not necessarily have preference over other relatives. For instance, out of first twenty-four Caliphs, only six were succeeded by their eldest sons. So, like all other Muslim monarchies, the law of primogeniture was unknown to the Abbasides. It became one of the causes of their weakness and downfall.

Comparison with the Orthodox and Umayyad Caliphate. The Abbaside Caliphate claimed to be a new kind of Muslim rule. The Abbasides called their government the "Daula", i.e., the new era or the new dynasty. As distinguished from the Umayyads, their great rivals, from whom they wrested power, they had restored the rule of the Quran and Sunna which guided their government and policy. They consulted the Ulema in matters of state and law. They appointed them to high judicial offices. They preferred to style themselves as "Imams" or spiritual heads of the Caliphate, They became a sort of Popes or Pontiffs of Islam. The later Abbasides even styled themselves as the "Khalifat Allah", the Caliph of Allah, and not as "Khilafat Rasul Ullah" the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah. Furthermore, Mutawakkil and his successors even assumed the highsounding title of "*zill Allah ala al-arz*"—"the shadow of Allah on earth." But in reality the Abbasides used the name of Islam to strengthen their dynasty and win support of the Muslims to their rule. They did not restore the simple, non-hereditary and elective caliphate of the Orthodox period. We may, in short, say that the Orthodox Caliphate was a national theocracy of the Arabs, the Umayyad Caliphate was their national imperialism, while the Abbyside Caliphate was a personal theocratic absolutism. Unlike the Orthodox, but like the Umayyad Caliphate, the Abbaside had no Shura. Only Mamun established a Council of State, representing all the communities of the empire, which later became an assembly of the learned divines and scholars. Unlike the Orthodox, but like the Umayyads, the Abbaside Caliphs surrounded themselves with a court, which was at first filled with the leading nobles and chiefs, but later by the freedmen, slave commanders and officials of the Caliphs.

THE WAZIR

Next to the Caliph stood the Vizier (Wazir). whose office was probably of Persian origin, a proof of Persian influence on the Abbasides. According to the Shariat or Muslim Law, the Caliph could delegate his authority to his appointed officials, among whom the Wazir was the highest. The Wazir exercised

the civil authority of the Caliph, the Qazi his judicial authority, and the Ameer or military commander his military powers.

According to Al-Mawardi and other Muslim writers, there were two kinds of vizierates : (*i*) a "tafwiz" vizierate, with full and unlimited authority, and (*ii*) a "tanfiz" vizierate, with limited authority. The "unlimited" wazir exercised all powers of government, except to appoint his own successor or to dismiss an official appointed by the Caliph. Wellhausen has rightly described him as the *alter ego* of the Caliph. The "limited" wazir was really the hêad of a government department. He had no initiative but acted as ordered by the Caliph. Except the first two Caliphs, all other Abbaside Caliphs employed powerful Wazirs, who exercised all powers of sovereignty on behalf of the Caliph. Among them the most famous were the Barmakides. The first ten Caliphs, kept their Wazirs under their authority. When, however, the Caliphs sank more and more into the pleasures of the harem, the Wazirs became the virtual rulers of the Empire. And when the Abbaside Caliphs became mere figureheads and puppets in the hands of the Ameer ul-Umra or of the Sultans, the authority of thier Wazirs also sank into nothing. The wazirs of the Sultans became far more powerful than the wazirs of the Caliphs. Thus the rise and decline of the vizierate was closely linked to the rise, decline and fall of the Caliphate. Indeed, with the rise of the Ameer ul-Umra under al-Muqtadir (908-32) the office of the vizierate lost its former position and power.

However, the office of a wazir was no easy job. His duties were many and his perils great. He appointed and dismissed the functionaries of the state, supervised the collection and disbursement of taxes ; all royal correspondence passed through his hands; he performed the civil and military functions of the Caliph ; and he was ever ready to advise or be consulted by the Caliph in all matters of the state. Above all, he had to win and keep the confidence of his autocratic and despotic master. If he lost his confidence, he not only lost his office but also his head and all. The tragic fate of the Barmakides is too well-known to be repeated here. Several other Wazirs lost their lives when their autocratic masters became suspicious of their loyalty. The very first Wazir, Abu Salama, was assassinated by the orders of Shaffah for his Alide sympathies. His successor, Abu'l Jahm, was poisoned, while working with his suspicious master. Feeling the effects of the poison, the doomed Wazir rose to go out. "Where are you going?" asked the Caliph. "To where you have sent me", replied the unfortunate Wazir. Such was the fate of many a Wazir, who had to suffer much from the suspicious nature of the Abbaside Caliphs, a very strong trait of the Abbaside family. They also suffered from the jealously of their rivals in the court and the fickle-

mindedness of the populace of Baghdad.

Hajib and the public executioner : Two other officials are worth mentioning. The first was the *Hajib* or Chamberlain. His duty was to introduce into caliphal presence those who sought audience or interview with the caliph. Indeed, the Hajib was an intermediary between the people and the caliphs who increasingly kept themselves aloof from the people. The Abbaside Caliphs were not so accessible as the Umayyads. On the other hand, they were surrounded by awe and majesty of royalty and the decorum and strict rules of the court.

The second official was the public executioner who also stood beside the Caliph with his leather carpet on which he cut the heads of the unfortunate victims, ordered by the Caliph to be executed there and then. Such executions were sudden, which enhanced the awe and majesty of the Caliphs. The office of the public executioner was an innovation, borrowed from the Persians. "The Arabs", writes Wellhausen, "knew no executioner, and the Umaiyids kept none ; with the Abbasides he was indispensable." The Abbasides also employed an astrologer, after the Persian fashion.

CENTRAL DEPARTMENTS OR DIWANS

The Central Government under the Abbasides was more complex than under the Umayyads. Besides the five Boards or Diwans which existed under the Umayyads, the Abbasides established several more.

Diwan al-Aziz. The highest body in the Central Government was called ad-Diwan al-Aziz or the August Board. It was presided by the Grand Vizier and comprised the heads of the various departments of the state. Under this Diwan worked several other Diwans with their own administrative functions.

Diwan ul Kharaj, or the Department of Finance. T e Diwan ul Kharaj existed since the Umayyad times and was the most important Department. It was presided by the offlcer called Sahibul Kharaj or the Master of Taxes, who was an outstanding functionary in the government of the Abbasides. He supervised the work of collecting taxes in all the provinces, especially of Iraq, the richest province of the Abbaside Empire. He had to keep an account of these taxes. Three such accounts of revenues of the Empire have come down to us, mentioned below.

Diwan al-Rasail : It was the Chancery Office, presided by an officer who was one of most important secretaries of the state. His duties were to draw up the caliphal orders,

diplomas, letters patent and political correspondence. After they were approved by the Caliph or the Vizier, he sealed and despatched them. He also revised the royal letters and sealed them. He also attended the Caliph when he received and heard petitions or complaints of the people and recorded royal decisions. Owing to the nature of their work, the secretaries and clerks of this Diwan were selected from such men who were elegant and talented writers.

Diwan ul Tawqi or the Board of Requests : The Diwan ut Tawqi was originally called the Diwan al-Khatim under the Umayyads, which was changed, probably in the reign of Harun ar-Rashid, into this Diwan. Its functions were to register, and seal with the royal seal and motto the letters of the Caliph.

Diwan ul Barid : or the Postal Department existed since the days of the Umayyads. But the Abbaside Caliphs entrusted it with the important task of intelligence or espionage as well. It was headed by the Sahib ul Barid or the Postmaster General. He placed before the Caliph the secret reports received by him from the postmasters in the provinces and from other intelligence officers. Owing to his secret work, he was designated as "Sahib ul Barid wa'l-Akhbar"—Master of the Post and Intelligence Service. He also appointed the postal functionaries in the provinces, and supervised their work. He supervised the work of conveying royal mail. In view of the secret work, the Postmaster General was in the confidence of the Caliph and was one of his most important officials. He submitted reports to the Caliph regarding the movements of the officials, nobles and other important persons, the conditions in the provinces, the state of the peasantry and agriculture, the attitude of the local authorities and the condition of trade and currency. He reported to the Caliph even about the Governors. The provincial postmasters reported to him directly even over the head of the governors. The whole Empire was divided into 930 stages for the transmission of mails. Relay of horses and mules, and in the desert, camels, were kept at each stage to convey the mail from stage to stage. Though established for royal mail, private letters were also transmitted by the Diwan ul Barid. This Department used carrier-pigeons for speedier transmission of news. The first recoreded instance of the news conveyed by the carrier-pigeons was that of death of Babek Khurrami to Baghdad.

Diwan ul Jund was another department which the Abbasides inherited from their predecessors. It was responsible for the recruitment, payment of pensions or stipends to the soldiers, etc. This Department was directly supervised by the Caliph or his

vizier.

Besides these five Diwans, which already existed before the Abbaside Caliphate, they also established several others which we now describe.

Diwan ul Azimmah or the Audit and Account Office. It was first established by Al-Mahdi, in order to organise the work of auditing the expenditure of the Central Government. This Department was mainly responsible for improving the taxation and financial administration of the Abbasides. Its provincial branches were called the Diwan uz-Zimam.

Diwan al-Nazri fi'l-Mazalim : It was a Board for the inspection of grievances, submitted to the Caliph. It was really the supreme court of criminal appeal under the Abbasides, presided by the Vizier. It might well be called the Equity Court, for its chief function was to set aright cases of miscarriage of justice in the administrative and political departments.

Diwan ad-Diya and *Diwan as-Sawafi*. Both these Departments were concerned with the royal lands, called as-Sawafi, and estates, called ad-Diya. The Abbaside Caliphs were big landlords and fief holders. Their landed possessions were supervised by these Diwans.

Diwan an-Nafaqat was the department of royal household and dealt with the salaries of the court officials, provisions, constructions and repairs of the caliphal palaces, stables, and other buildings for the royal use.

Diwan as-Sirr was the Secrecy Office. It worked as a branch of the Diwan ar-Rasail or the Chancery Office, mentioned above.

Diwan ul-Arz dealt with the inspection of military equipment, and was probably a branch of the Diwan ul Jund, the War Office, mentioned above.

Other Departments : There were a number of other Boards and Departments, such as the *Diwan ul Mawali wa'l Ghilman*, which was the office of the freedmen and slaves of the Caliph ; the *Diwan al-Aata* or the donation office ; *Diwan al Mukatiat* which gave governmental grants ; the *Diwan ul Akriha* dealt with the construction of canals, aqueducts and irrigation works ; the *Katib ul Jihbazeh* or the Minister for Minorities, which looked after the interests of the non-Muslim minorities of the Caliph.

Department of Police or Shurta : It was not organised on all-empire basis. Each important town or city had its own special police, called the Shurta, under a chief, called the Sahib ush-Shurta. The Shurta was a para-military organisation, entrusted with the task of patrolling the city, and protecting the life and property of the citizens. In the capital, the Sahib ush-Shurta was one of the most important officers and sometimes held the posion of vizier.

The Mohtasib or Public Censor : The Abbasides appointed an important police official in all towns and cities, called the Mohtasib or Public Censor. His duties were to inspect wieghts and measures, censor public conduct and private behaviour of the inhabitants in order to check the indulgence in wine and other sinful activities, prohibited by Islam, and suppress other public nuisances. In short, he censored public morals, for which reason he was both feared and hated by the people. Attended by a posse of subordinates, he went round the markets, bazars and even private dwellings of the people to check and punish the breaches of conduct and violations of rules and regulations of commercial and moral behaviour.

Judicial System. The dispensing of justice was always regarded by the Muslim rulers as a duty of supreme importance. It was entrusted by the Caliph or his Vizier to a judge, selected from among the members of the Faqihs or Jurists of Muslim Law (Fiqh). Though loosely organised, the Abbaside judicial system consisted of three kinds of courts : civil courts of the Qazis for Muslims, the civil courts for the Non-Muslims, and the criminal courts.

Civil Courts. A civil court was presided by a judge, called the Qazi. According to the theory of Muslim Law, Qazi must be a male adult, in full possession of his mental faculties, a free citizen, a Muslim, well-versed in Fiqh or Muslim Law and theology, and of irreproachable character. Every town had a Qazi's court, while big cities had several such courts, presided by the Naibs of the Qazi. In Baghdad there was the court of the Chief Qazi, called Qazi ul Quzzat. Among the Chief Qazis, Abu Yusuf had been the most famous for the part he played in the evolution of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence. At first, the provincial Qazis were appointed and supervised by the provincial governors. But later they came under the direct authority of the Qazi ul Quzzat in Baghdad. According to al-Mawardi, there were two types of Qazis : (*i*) Qazis of the first class, who possessed general and unlimited duties of deciding all cases, punishing all violations of the religious law, acting as guardians for orphans, lunatics and minors and appointing their subordinates or "naibs" and even presiding at Friday

prayers ; and (*ii*) Qazis of the second class, whose duties were limited to those mentioned in their diploma of appointment from the Caliph, vizier or governor. In case of too much work, the Qazi was assisted by an officer, called Adal. In the prosperous days of Mamun, the pay of a Qazi was as much as 4000 dirhams a month.

Besides the Qazi's courts for the Muslims, there were civil courts for the Non-Muslims to settle their civil disputes according to their personal law. These courts were presided by their own judges.

Criminal Courts. Though no clear distinction was made between civil and criminal justice, yet criminal cases were dealt by the magistrate, called *Sahib ul Mazalim or Nazir ul Mazalim*. There were, however, very few of such courts, for criminal cases among the tribes were settled by tribal chiefs. Hence they existed only in few towns and cities, which dealt with cases of breach of peace and administration or excesses in taxes, etc. The highest criminal court existed in Baghdad, called the *Diwan an-Nazr fi'l Mazalim*, which we have described above. It was the Supreme Court of Criminal Appeal and was presided by the Caliph himself or by the Grand Vizier. Other members of this Court were the Chief Qazi, the Hajib, the principal heads of various departments and some of Muftis or jurisconsults. This Court was powerful enough to punish highest officials and other influential persons.

REVENUE SYSTEM OF THE ABBASIDES

Revenue Administration. One thing which distinguished the Abbasides from their Umayyad predecessors, was their efficient revenue administration. They had purged it of the injustices and inequalities which caused so much resentment during Umayyad times. Firstly, they abolished the distinction between the Arabs and non-Arabs in matters of taxes. Secondly, they imposed Jizya only on non-Muslims and Kharaj on all land-owners, whether Muslims or not. But in other matters, such as payment of unauthorised taxes, etc., the Abbasides introduced no improvements. The administrative machinery also remained the same. The Central Boards or Diwans which dealt with the collection of the taxes and revenues were the Diwan-ul-Kharaj, the Diwan as-Sawafi, and the Diwan ad Diya. The Sahib-ul-Kharaj was the chief of the finance department, the Diwan-ul-Kharaj.

Revenue collection was one of the most important functions of the Abbaside State. An elaborate network of revenue-collectors existed in the provinces, divided and subdivided into various parts

for this purpose. First of all, a province was divided into several districts, called *Kurahs*. A Kurah was subdivided into sub-districts, called *Tassujs*. A Tassuj was further divided into several rural areas, called *Rustaqs*. A Rustaq comprised a number of villages or *Quriyas*. These revenue divisions and subdivisions were particularly found in fertile provinces, like Lower Iraq or as-Sawad, Egypt, etc. The revenue collectors in the provinces were also designated as Sahib-ul-Kharaj.

Sources of Revenue : Besides the five traditional taxes, authorised by Islam, the Abbasides levied several unauthorised taxes and imposts. The various sources of revenue of the Empire were derived from : (1) Zakat or poor-tax, imposed on the properties of the Muslims, such as arable lands, herds, gold, silver, marchandise and other productive sources of income; (2) Jizya or poll-sex, imposed on all non-Muslims in lieu of military service and exemption from Zakat ; (3) Kharaj or land-tax, levied on all land-owners and cultivators, Muslims and non-Muslims ; it was the most important as well as the largest source of state-revenues ; (-) Khums or the royal fifth in the war-booty ; (5) the Ushr, the Ushur and Sadaqat, which were the tithes imposed on the lands of the Muslims, the goods of the merchants, alms or charities given by the Muslims. These were the traditional taxes. Besides, them, the following were the new ones ; (6) customs duties ; (7) salt and fishery taxes ; (8) trade-taxes, levied upon shopkeepers ; (9) the fifth of the produce of mines and pastures ; (10) tax on mills and factories ; (11) tax on convenyances and luxuries ; (12) tolls and imposts on the borders.

The expenditures were regulated by the traditional rules of Islam. The revenue from the charities, like Zakat, Sadaqats and Ushr, were charged or spent on the maintenance of the poor, the orphans, the widows and the needy, while the revenues from the tributes, *e. g.* Jizya, Kharaj and Ushr, etc., were charged on the salaries of the Qazis, soldiers, digging canals and the construction of other public utilities.

Total Revenues of the Abbasides. Various reports of the total revenues of the early Abbaside Caliphs have come down to us, which indicate their prosperous conditions. According to a report of the days of Harun, given by Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Abdul Hamid, the total revenues of the Empire were about 539 million dirhams a year. According to a report, given by Ibn Khaldun, the total revenues in the days of Mamun were about 4000 million dirhams a year. Accoeding to a report given by Qudamah, the total revenues in the days of Mutasim were about 426 million dirhams a year. According to another report, given by Ibn Khurdadhbih, the total income in the reign of Mutawakkil was

about 388 million dirhams a years. As regards the expenditure, it may be remarked that when Mansur died, the royal treasury contained 600 million dirhams and 14 million dinars ; when Harun ar-Rashid died it had over 900 million dirharms ; and when Muktafi died in 908, the royal treasury had properties worth 100 million dinars. (A dinar was then equivalent to 22 dirhams).

Methods of assessing land-tax or Kharaj : Three different methods prevailed in the Abbaside Caliphate for assessing the amount of Land-tax or Kharaj ; (1) the assessment by measurement of land, called *Muhasibah* with fixed amount in cash or kind. It was the oldest method and was in use on crownlands; (2) *Muqasimah* or assessment by measuring the amount of the produce. It was a payment in kind and was a sort of share-cropping or "batai" or metayage system. It was first introduced by Mansur for the payment of land-tax on wheat and oat, but was later extended to other produce by Mahdi; (3) *Muqatiah system*, which was a sort of permanent settlement based upon leases or agreements between the government and the grantee. It was mostly in use on crownlands and feudal estates.

MILITARY ORGANISATION UNDER THE ABBASIDERS

The history of the rise and fall of the Abbasides was closely linked with the organisation and spirit of their military forces. The early Abbasides, when their Caliphate was vigorous and prosperous, possessed first-rate, well-equipped, and powerful armies. But the armies of the later Abbasides became weak, disorganised and torn by internal dissensions and rivalries.

Their Numbers. The early Abbasides inherited large armed forces from their Umayyad predecessors. But their liberal attitude towards the subject peoples further increased the size of their armies. Merwan II, the last of the Umayyads, had a regular force of 1,20,000 men in the Battle of the Zab, while the forces of his Abbaside rival, as-Saffah, did not number so much. But afterwards, Harun ar-Rashid, when he marched against the Byzantine Emperor, had a force of 1,35,000 regular troops and a large number of volunteers. His son, Mamun, had an army of 1,25,000 men in Iraq alone. Later in 917, al-Muqtadir paraded before the Byzantine envoys in Baghdad an army of 1,60,000 soldiers. Many more troops had also been garrisoned in other places or stationed on the marches of the Empire.

Regulars and volunteers. The large armies of the Abbasides were divided into two sorts of soldiers, the regular troops or the Jund, recruited and paid by the State, called the *Murtaziqah*, (*i. e.* regularly paid) ; and the volunteers, called *Mutatawwi'ah*. They

received no pay from the State but only daily rations when on active duty.

National Corps. Mansur, who was the real founder of the Abbaside Caliphate, organised his soldiers into three national corps or divisions, *viz.*, the Mudarite corps of the Nothern Arabs, the Himyarite corps of the Southern Arabs, and the Persian corps of the Khurasanis. Later, Mutasim added a fourth corps of his Turkish mamluks or slave-soldiers, in which were included the Turkomans, the Slavs, the Berbers, the Negroes and slaves from various other nationalities. This division of the Abbaside army into national corps became later a source of weakness, rather than strength, for it engendered national rivalries and disputes among the soldiers of the later Caliphs. The Turkish slave-soldiers became a special source of troubles, for they were unruly, grasping and had no links with the people among whom they dwelt and over whom they lorded. They behaved like the Praetorian guards of the ancient Roman Empire in its decline. They eclipsed and drove out the Arabs and the Khurasanis from military service. This became one of the causes of the decline and fall of the Abbaside Caliphate.

Composition of the Army: The regulars or the Murtaziqah consisted of five kinds of warriors, namely; (1) the infantary (*Harbiyah*), equipped with swords, spears and shields ; (2) the cavalry (*fursan*), equipped with long lances, bows and arrows, swords, and wore helmets and breastplates ; (3) the archers (*ramiyah*) with bows of various kinds ; (4) the naphtha firemen (*Naffateen*) who shot at the enemy burning naphtha balls or Greek-fire, the secret of which the Muslims had at last discovered ; and (5) a corps of sappers and engineers, called the *Naqqabun* or hole-makers and the *Manjaniqeen* or the missile-men who operated the catapults (*manjaniqs*) and other siege weapons. Besides these warriors, there was also a company of the labour-corps, called the *Ghilmans.*

Divisions of the Army. On the battlefield, the army divisions were the traditional five, *viz.*, the Centre (*Qalb*), commanded by the general; the right wing (*Maysarah*); the left wing (*Maymanah*); the vanguard (*Taliah*), comprising mostly the cavalry; and the rearguard (*Saqah*). The scouts moved ahead of the main force for reconnaisance. On the battlefield, these divisions were arrayed either in Sufuf (*i. e.*, in lines), or in Kurdus (*i. e.*, cohorts).

Army formations. In each army, the soldiers were organised into definite formations. The smallest army unit comprised of ten soldiers, commanded by an officer called *arif* (decurion). Every fifty soldiers were commanded by a *khalifah.* Every hundred soldiers were commanded by a *Naqib* (centurion). Every one thousand soldiers were commanded by a *Qaid* (captain),

and an army of 10,000 soldiers was commanded by an *Ameer* (general).

Pay of the soldiers. During the Umayyad period, a soldier was usually paid 1,000 dirhams a year. The Abbasides seemed to have decreased this pay considerably. As-Saffah paid his foot-soldiers a salary of 80 dirhams a month (960 dirhams a year), besides the usual rations and allowances, while the horsemen received double this pay. Under Harun the pay of an ordinary soldiers had fallen to 60 dirhams a month) (720 dirhams a year), while under Mamun it fell still lower to 20 dirhams a month (240 dirhams a year), the horseman, as usual, getting double the ordinary soldier's pay, that is 40 dirhams a month. Many causes contributed to this decrease in the pay of the soldiers. Firstly, the price of the necessaries of life fell constantly with the appreciation in gold. For instance, in the beginning of the Abbaside rule a dinar was equivalent to 10 dirhams, but in Mamun's time it rose to 15 dirhams, while fifty years after Mamun's death it became equal to 22 dirhams. So with lesser money the people could purchase more things. Secondly, the pay of an ordinary soldier fared much better in comparsion with those of other professions. For instance, when Mansur constructed Baghdad, he paid only two *daniqs* a day to an ordinary labour, which came to a monthly wages of 10 dirhams, while a master mason got 30 dirhams a month. A clerk got 10 dirhams a month, and that even without the soldier's free rations and other allowances. It shows clearly that soldierly profession was comparatively better paid. Moreover, the pays mentioned above were of the soldiers in Iraq, a comparatively peaceful province. Soldiers stationed in troubled provinces or on active duty or in times of war, got higher pays. Mamun, for instance, paid 40 dirhams to a foot-soldier and 100 dirhams to a horseman stationed in Damascus, as compared to 20 dirhams and 40 dirhams respectively to those in Iraq. Lastly, the Abbasides maintained much larger armies than their Umayyad predecessors and recruited them from all kinds of their subjects, Arabs, Persians, Berbers, Turks, etc. Hence they could afford to pay less, thanks to the simple law of supply and demand. In spite of all this, the huge armies proved to be a heavy burden on the Caliphal exchequer, especially when the decline of the Abbasides began after Mutawakkil. His successors were unable to pay their soldiers regularly. This led to many revolts among the soldiers, especially among the Turkish soldiery, who cried for the payment of the arrears of their salaries. Consequently, Mutawakkil's successors were compelled (*i*) to recognise the independence of the rebellious governors of distant provinces, and (*ii*) grant "iqtiat" or lands to military commanders and other officials and nobles. This practice led to the growth of

military feudalism in subsequent times. Nevertheless, the heavy military burden, the unruly Turkish soldiery and the rise of independent principalities and military feudalism became the causes of the growing decline and disintegration of the Abbaside Caliphate.

MILITARY SYSTEM

Fortification and Frontier Defence. The Umayyads maintained an active defence against their foreign enemies, such as the Byzantines. The early Abbaside Caliphs also continued the active policy of frontier defence, especially against the Byzantines in Asia Minor. The interregnum between the fall of the Umayyads and the rise of the Abbasides enabled the Byzantines to invade and conquer large tracts from the Arabs on the borders between Asia Minor and Syria. After firmly re-establishing his power, the second Abbaside Caliph, Mansur, renewed the policy of war on the Byzantines and active defence of his frontiers. He fortified the strategic town, named Malatia, which was captured and destroyed by the Byzantines in 751 A. D., and built new forts at Hadat in Cilicia, Zibatra, in Laodicia and several other places in Phrygia and Cappadocia. Harun ar-Rashid fortified Mar'ash, rebuilt Tarsus and garrisoned it with troops. He built a fort near Mar'ash, named Haruniya after the Caliph. He placed the frontier regions, called Awaseem, under a military commander. He even constructed a line of fortresses and fortified watch posts called "ribat" along the borders in order to provide defence in depth against the Byzantines. They were filled with soldiers. He settled several tribes in the frontier regions so that constant supply of warriors might be available to defend them. The settlers in these regions were given higher pays, lands and other concessions. War on the frontiers became an annual affair, so that it came to be known as the *Saifah* or summer-war. This policy of active defence was continued by Harun's successors, Mamun and Mutasim, but was neglected by Mutawakkil and his successors. Thereupon the Byzantines again captured large parts of the Muslim territories in Asia Minor. Later they even conquerred large parts of Syria, Armenia and Mesopotamia, even threatending Baghdad and Damascus during 963-94. It was only the entry of the Seljuqs into the government of the Abbaside Caliphate that checked further Byzantine advance. They were then thrown back, as we have seen during the reigns of Sultans Tughril and Alp Arslan.

Siege-weapons, Hospitals, etc. The Abbaside armies were well equipped with various kinds of weapons, specially siege-weapons. Their siege artillery comprised of ballista, (Arabic *arradah*), catapults and mangonels (*manjaniqs*), which were used to hurl stones, rocks and balls of Greek-fire, battoring-rams (*dabbabah*,

kabsh), which were iron-shod tree trunks, suspended on a mobile carriage and struck against the walls of the forts to breach them. A corps of engineers, called *manjaniqeen*, operated these weapons. The chief of the engineers, called *Ameer-ul-Manjaniqeen*, headed this corps. Yaqub Sabir al-Manjaniqi had been the famous and ablest of these military engineers. He wrote a book on the art of war, entitled *Umdat-ul-Masalik fi'l siast-ul-Mamalik*. The Abbasides had discovered the secret of making the Greek-fire, a weapon of which formerly the Greeks had the monopoly. When campaigning, the Abbaside armies were accompanied by a staff of physicians, a well-supplied hospital and ambulances in the form of litters carried by camels "Harun", remarks Hitti, "is the caliph credited with introducing these features and pressing science into the service of the warfare." Arsenals and military depots for manufacturing arms existed in various places.

Abbaside Navy. Early Abbasides inherited a naval tradition from the Umayyads and maintained it for a long time. In his wars against the Byzantines, Harun ar-Rashid successfully employed his fleet against them in the Mediterranean. He captured the islands of Rhodes, Crete and Cyprus. But when North Africa slipped out of the hands of the Abbasides, their naval fleet also lost supremacy in the Mediterranean. For some time, the Aghlabids and the Fatimids maintained the supremacy of the Muslim navy in the Mediterranean, but they declined afterwards. This fact enabled the European kingdoms and conquerors not only to re-capture Crete, Cyprus, and Sicily, but also to hurl their crusading armies against Syria and Palestine. The Abbasides also kept a navy in the East, that is, in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. But it was more a merchant fleet than a fighting unit, for there was then no rival naval power in the Eastern waters.

Strength and weakness of the Abbaside army. The early Abbasides maintained the glorious traditions of military prowess of the early Muslims. They were capable of waging aggressive wars against their many enemies, especially the Byzantines, who were impressed by their military skill, although they invariably dubbed the Muslims as "barbarians." A Byzantine Emperor, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, remarked about his Muslim foes, that "they are powerful and warlike, so that if only a thousand of them occupy a camp it is impossible to dislodge them. They do not ride horses but camels." The secret of the Muslims' military strength lay in three things, *viz.*, their great numbers, their mobility and their military leadership which was skilful, prudent and circumspect. The Greek Emperor Leo VI the Wise (886-912) wrote in his treatise on military tactics, "Of all the barbarous nations they (the Muslims)

are the best advised and most prudent in their military operations."

Decline of military power. There were also a few chinks in the armour of the military prowess of the Medieval Muslims. Firstly, they hated to fight in cold and rainy weather. This was particularly true of the Arabs and the Persians, who could never conquer those lands and countries which are situated in cold climate, such as Asia Minor or Europe. It was the advent of the Turks, themselves coming from cold regions beyond Central Asia, that enabled Muslim arms to finally subdue the Byzantine Empire after the fall of the Abbasides. The dislike of the cold was shared by their chief war-animal, the camel. Indeed, the early Muslims could go as far in their conquerring mission as their camel could. The snow-covered lands of Europe and of North Asia were too cold for the Arab and his camel. Secondly, the Abbaside soldiers did not possess enough military discipline to re-group their forces after their lines were once shattered. It was due to the reason that they were recruited from all sorts of peoples who had no loyalty towards their military leaders and rulers. Indeed, after Mutawakkil's reign, the Abbasides armies mostly consisted of the mercenary troops of the Turkish mamluks. They were always rebellious and disloyal for reasons of the arrears of pay, intrigues of their commanders, etc. But the chief reason was the collapse of the Abbaside economic system, which was unable to finance their huge military expenditure, as well as the equally large expenditures of an extravagant court, a corrupt officialdom and a greedy nobility of disintegrating Empire. These factors led to the rise of military feudalism, which gave a new lease of life to the collapsing Abbaside Caliphate.

Rise of Military Feudalism. Al-Muqtadir (907-32) was the first Abbaside Caliph to introduce a change in the methods of paying the salaries of his soldiers. Unable to pay them from his depleted treasury, he allowed his nobles and commanders to acquire possession of lands or provinces on the condition that they would collect the revenues in their areas, pay the expenses of administration and salaries of the soldiers, and remit a fixed sum annually to the Court at Baghdad. These lands or provinces thus granted were called "Iqtiat". It was a system of tax-farming. Later, the Buwayhid rulers introduced a further change. They did not pay their soldiers and commanders in cash but granted them lands. Thus from tax-farmers, they became fief-holders, maintaining themselves on the produce of the land which was free from every tax.

Iqta Feudalism of the Saljuqids. The Seljuq rulers afterwards regularised and improved this method still further. As we have

said above, they granted lands, towns or whole districts to their princes, nobles and commanders on two conditions, that is they would maintain a fixed number of soldiers from the revenues of of their fiefs as a sort of feudal levies to fight under the banner of the Sultan and pay a fixed yearly tribute to him. Forty such fiefs or estates existed in Iraq alone. This was the Seljuq system of military or *iqta* feudalism. It checked for some time the centrifugal tendencies of the ambitious governors and powerful princes and nobles. But it suffered from two serious defects and therefore, failed to give stability and strength to the declining Abbaside state, society and economy. Firstly, it required a strong central authority to maintain this feudal system and check the rebellious tendencies and ambitions of the fief-holders. The weak successors of Malik Shah did not provide such a political leadership. Consequently the centrifugal tendencies of the fief-holders and feudal lords came into full play once again, dividing and disintegrating the Seljuqi empire into several states and statelets, Secondly, the Seljuqi feudalism failed to evolve into a sound, stable and viable socio-economic system. The fief-holders were interested not in improving the productivity of their lands but only in seizing as large a share in the produce of the land as possible. Thus they impoverished the peasantry and ruined the prosperity of their lands. This fact enabled the Ismailian Assassins to win a large following of the Persian peasantry. It showed, therefore, that the feudal nobility had failed in social or socio-economic leadership. In other words, they lacked the powers of social organisation, which their counterparts in contemporary feudal Europe displayed so abundantly. In brief, the military feudalism of the later Abbaside period also failed to halt the process of disintegration and decay of the Abbaside Caliphate.

PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

The Provinces. Like the Umayyads, the Abbasides also did not establish well-defined provincial divisions. The boundaries of the provinces depended upon the whims of the caliphs, the wishes of the governors or the fluctuating fortunes of the Empire. Even the number of the provinces varied from time to time. On the whole, their size and number corresponded to those of the earlier Umayyad provinces. Broadly speaking, there were about 24 provinces in the Abbaside Empire during its earlier period of prosperity and unity. They were, to mention a few, As-Sawad or Lower Iraq ; al-Jazirah or upper Iraq ; Syria and Palestine; Egypt; the vast province of Qayrowan or North Africa ; Hijaz and Yemamah or Northern and Central Arabia ; Yemen or South Arabia ; Bahrayn and Oman or Eastern Arabia with Basra as its capital ; al-Jibal or the mountainous region of Western Persia, later called Iraq al-Ajam or Persian Iraq, which included impor-

tant cities like Hamadan, Ray, Isfahan ; Azerbaijan or Northen Persia, with Ardabil, Tabriz and Maraghah as its important towns ; Faris or South Persia, with Shiraz as its capital ; Khuzistan or South Western Persia, with Ahwaz as its important town; Kirman in south-eastern Persia ; Makran and Baluchistan ; Khurasan in north-eastern Persia with Nishapur, Merv and Herat as its important towns ; Sughd or Central Asia ; Khwarizm in the western parts of Central Asia ; Farghanah in its eastern parts ; Sistan in eastern Persia; and the provinces of Armenia, Qumis, Tabaristan and others, around the southern coast of the Caspian Sea.

Provincial Officials: The Governor. The most important official in a province was a Governor, usually called a Wali, but also called Ameer or Amil. He was appionted either by the Caliph or by his grand vizier. He possessed much power and many duties, but his effective authority depended upon his personal ability and the personality of the reigning Caliph. Generally speaking, the governor performed the same duties and possessed the same powers in his province as the Caliph had at the Centre. He was the supreme commander of the forces in his province, maintained peace and order, punished criminals, suppressed rebellions, dispensed justice by hearing cases of "Mazalim" or administrative and political wrongs and excesses, presided at Friday prayers, supervised religious life and morals of the local people, and superintended the collection of land-revenue and other taxes, etc.

Early Abbaside Caliphs were careful in keeping a strict control over their governors. They never kept a governor for long in one place, but transferred him from province to province. But when the Caliphate began to decline, the term of office of the governors became longer. Some of them even made it hereditary, thus becoming virtually independent rulers. In this way began, as we have already said, the process of disintegration of the Abbaside Caliphate.

Other provincial officials were the Qazi, the Sahib ush-Shurta, and the Mohtasib, whose functions we he have already described.

Provincial Diwans. Every Central Diwan had a corresponding Diwan or an official in the provinces. Among them, the most important were the Diwan ul Kharaj for assessing and collecting land-tax and other taxes ; the Diwan ar-Rasail to look after all official correspondence between the Centre and the province ; the Diwan az-Zimam for auditting the public finances ; the Diwan ul Barid or the provincial postal department and intelligence service ; the Diwan ad-Diya to manage the crownlands or caliphal estates, etc.

CHAPTER 28

ABBASIDE SOCIETY, SCIENCE AND CULTURE

The Age of the Abbasides was the period of the highest evolution and greatest development of Islamic society, thought and culture. Indeed, what is known as Islam today was mainly the achievement of the peoples who lived in this period. The Orthodox period witnessed the expansion of the Arab race, the Umayyad period was that of the political domination of the Arabs, but the Abbaside period witnessed the culmination of the evolution of Muslim society and culture, the perfection of Islamic theology and the afflorescence of Muslim arts, culture, science and thought. We shall briefly survey these developments and achievements under the Abbasides.

ABBASIDE SOCIETY

Evolution of Feudal society. During the Abbaside period the tribal organisation of the Orthodox and Umayyads days ceased to be the effective social order and was superseded by the feudal organisation. This evolution, however, was not uniform throughout the length and breadth of the Empire. It was confined to Iraq, Khurasan, Egypt and other socially advanced areas and regions. In the backward regions and provinces, where feudal society could not evolve, tribalism continued to flourish with its pristine simplicity. Even several advanced areas, with their highly developed feudal order, again regressed into tribalism when ruined by political anarchy or by the ravages of the new tribal invasions, such as those of the Turks or the Mongols. Hence viewed as a whole, the history of the Abbaside society reveals a strangely cyclic process of evolution and retardation, progress and regression, and of confused co-existance of higher and underdeveloped social systems. Thus a tribal society existed in the deserts and in the barren mountains, and a servile feudal society existed in fertile valleys and plains. It caused great confusion, disharmony and anarchy in all aspects of Abbaside society, state and culture, historical implications of which we have already considered above.

Social Structure. The Abbaside society consisted of several sections and classes of people.

Feudal Aristocracy. At the apex of the abbaside society stood the feudal aristocracy, headed by the Caliph and in later

times also the Sultan, and their courtiers, nobles, officials and military commanders. They dwelt in Baghdad, Samarra, and in other capital-cities of the Empire. The Abbaside Caliphs were the biggest landlords, owning vast lands, especially in as-Sawad or Lower Iraq. Their courtiers, who also possessed vast lands, were mostly feudal nobles, official and military commanders. Under the early Caliphs, they were mostly of free descent. But later, most of them were former slaves, freedmen and eunuchs of the Caliph. Similary, the political masters of the later Abbasides, *viz*., the Buwayhid Ameers and Seljuq Sultans, etc,, were accompanied by free men and courtiers. But later they also filled their courts with slaves, freedmen and eunuchs and gave lands and offices to them. Just as the Abbaside State lacked a law of succession to the throne, so the Abbaside feudal system lacked a law of inheritance which could ensure a proper care for the lands and properties of a family from generation to generation. Indeed, there was no guarantee or certainty that they would be handed down from one generation to the next in the same feudal family, for they could be confiscated by the Caliph, the Sultan, the governor or by any military adventurer at any time. The grant of lands and fiefs to former slaves and freedmen also introduced new elements of chaos, instability and lack of care, which prevented a continuous growth and development of the economic and social life. Lastly, the feudal aristocracy was immersed in unbridled luxury, pleasure and licence of the harems, which sapped their energies and weakend their character and mind. The family history of the Abbaside Caliphs, and of their nobles, commanders, etc., reveals the fact that a generation or two of able and energetic men were followed by weak, sensual and indolent successors who indulged in every vice and pleasure, till they were ousted or expelled by new conquerors. Thus the Arab aristocracy of the early Abbaside was replaced by the Persians, who were in their turn supplanted by a long succession of Turkish conquerors and nobles. Such rapid changes of men and leaders, practice and customs completely undermined the basis and conditions of social stability, continuity, development and progress of the Abbaside society.

Mercantile communities. The Abbaside Caliphate was one of the most prosperous periods in the history of Islam. Along with the feudal aristocracy dwelt the mercantile communities all over the Empire. These communities comprised big merchants, bankers, financiers, traders, shopkeepers, artisans and workers. Besides Baghdad which had a huge population of several lakh inhabitants, there were many flourishing towns, cities and ports in all the provinces, especially in Iraq, Khurasan, Central Persia, Syria and Egypt. The wealth of these communities was derived from trade and commerce which extended over vast distances and several countries and even continents, and also from home industry

and agriculture, carried on by manual production. There were many merchants and traders who rivalled the feudal nobles and courtiers in wealth and fortunes. For instance, a Baghdad jeweller, Ibn al-Jassas, possessed so much wealth that he remained wealthy even after al-Muqtadir had confiscated 1,60,00,000 dinars (about Rs. 16 crores) of his property. "Certain Basrah merchants whose ships carried goods to distant parts of the world had an annual income of more than a million dirhams." Some of the maritime merchants of Siraf, a famous port-town on the Persian Gulf, possessed wealth of 40,00,000 dinars (about Rs. 4 crores) each.

Though the fortunes of the mercantile communities were directly affected by the kaleidoscopic rise and fall of the empires and kingdoms, they were also exposed to many dangers and evils in peaceful times. They were, to mention a few, the capricious confiscations by the Caliphs, Sultans, governors, officials and military adventurers, lack of security and peace due to political anarchy, excessive tolls, taxes and customs barriers, and within their own social and family life the prevalence of polygamy, concubinage, etc., resulting in the disputes and discontinuity of family traditions and fortunes. These were the causes which led to the decline and even extinction of several mercantile and industrial towns and communities at the end of the Abbaside Caliphate or after its fall, such as Kufa, Wasit, Siraf, Nishapur, Khwarizm, etc.

The Slaves. Abbaside society was essentially a slave-owning society. The slaves were found everywhere,—in the families and harems as household servants, eunuchs, girl-slaves and concubines, on the farms and factories as lobourers, artisans and workers, in the business firms and shops as trading agents of their masters, in the governmental offices as public functionaries and officials, in the army as fighters and commanders and in the court as courtiers and nobles, servants and spies of the Caliph or Sultan, often high in his confidence. They were brought by capture or purchase from almost all the neighbouring countries around the Abbaside Empire and were classified accordingly. Thus there were Turkish slaves, brought from Central Asia, called the *Faraghina*, (after Farghana in Central Asia); the North African or Berber slaves, called the *Magharibа* or the Westerns, for they came from the west of the Muslim world ; the Negro slaves from Abyssina or Black Africa, called the *Zanj* ; and the Greek, Slav or European slaves, generally called the *Saqlabiyah* or the Slavonic slaves, who were much prized for their blue eyes and fair complexion, especially females. The slaves were also classified according to their employment or use. The *Mamluks* were the slave soldier, recruited mostly from among the Turkish and Berber slaves. The *Zanj* were the Negro slave workers and cultivators. The *Ghilmans* were the boy-slaves or eunuchs, who attended the person of their masters

and were often their favourites. When the period of decline and degeneracy began, the Ghilmans were put to unnatural use. Lastly, there were female slaves or slave girls, called the *Jawari*, who were put to various kinds of uses, as domestic servants, singers, dancers and concubines.

These slaves, both male and female, were usually trained and educated for various professions and skills during their childhood and early life by their captors or masters before they were sold, so as to fetch handsome price. This was particularly so in the case of the Mamluks or slave-soldiers, the Ghilmans and the female singers, dancers, etc. Many of these slaves rose to positions of confidence and trust in the service of their masters. The Caliph's slaves, for instance, became commanders, governors and other high officials. The female slaves, if beautiful and properly trained, fetched very high prices. For instance, Harun ar-Rashid bought one slave-girl, named Dhat-al-Khal, for 70,000 dirhams. Slavery was widely prevalent. Almost everybody had slaves, according to his wealth and social position. For instance, the Caliph al-Muqtadir had in his palace about 11,000 white and black slaves. Owing to the teachings of Islam, the slaves were on the whole kindly treated, especially the domestic slaves who were treated almost as family members. Nevertheless, the institution of slavery had very deleterious effects on the moral tone of the Abbaside society and had disastrous implications for its economic vigour and progress. The servile concubinage and the institution of the Ghilmans lowered the moral tone of the people, disrupted family life and corrupted the character and conduct of all. The use of slave singers and dancers brought discredit and disfavour to the noble arts of music and dance. Above all, the use of slaves in business, industry and agriculture lowered the value and prestige of manual labour and hindered the growth of feudal economy, industrial crafts and trades.

Muslim Women: Causes of their Degradation. Like the slaves, the women were one of the most degraded classes of the Abbaside society, no matter whether they were of free or servile origin. In the beginning of the Abbaside period, their social status was fairly high and dignified, and they enjoyed freedom and respect in the family and society. But afterwards their position and role in social life sank rapidly, particularly where the family life was flooded with slave-girls and concubines of all varieties and talents. Several social and religious rules, conventions and institution came into being which restricted the life and freedom of the womenfolk and lowered their social role and respect. They were, for instance, the Purdah, and the harem filled with several wives and innumerable concubines, polygamy which was universal, servile concubinage, etc. The institution of Purdah or strict seclusion of women had its origin in the later years of the Umayyad Caliphate, but

became widespread under al-Mutawakkil. It became rigidly universal under the later Abbasides. The Harem, and other social institutions, affecting the life of the women, evolved in the same manner, *i. e.*, with rudimentary beginnings under the early Abbasides, but became rigid and universally prevalent under the later Caliphs. In consequence, they spread increasing demoralisation and degeneracy throughout the Abbaside society.

Women ceased to play a dynamic role in family and social life. Free women counted no better than the slave concubines. Every man, whether rich or poor, high or low, had several concubines, besides his legally wedded wives. In the Abbaside dynasty, for instance, out of 37 Caliphs only three were born of free mothers and they only among the first ten great Caliphs, namely, as-Saffah, Mahdi and Amin, while all others, were the sons of the slave-girls. The same was true of the courtiers, officials, soldiers, merchants, traders, scholars, etc. This led to a whole progeny of the sons of the concubines who outnumbered those of the free women. It disrupted and even shattered the health and vigour of the family life, broke down the family ties of love and affection, traditions and achievements, sapped the social dynamism, energy and character of all members of the family and lowered the position and respect of the female sex. The pride of family and race vanished from among the Arabs and the Persians, when they were swamped by a flood of the servile progeny and half-breeds. The poet al Mubarrad expressed his feelings of contempt and despair in these words : "Sons of concubines have become so numerous amongst us that I wish to God to lead me to a land where I shall see no bastards." So low the position of women had sank that the birth of a daughter was regarded as a calamity and her marriage as an insult and disaster. Many a father, like Abu Bakr al-Khwarizmi (died 1002 A. D.) wished "to marry his daughter to a grave", for it would be "the best of sons-in-law."

The decline and degeneracy of the Abbaside society and womanhood can be noticed from the fact that though at the outset there were several free women who achieved fame due to their ability and talents, but there were none in the subsequent ages, except a few talented slave-girls like the famous Khayzuran, the slave-wife of Mahdi and the mother of Harun. It was only the influx of new tribes of the Seljuqs and Turks, still accustomed to tribal freedom and respect for women, that brought a few famous women, like Turkan Khatun, the favourite wife of Malik Shah. "We even find women," writes Sanaullah, "holding the important office of fief-holders and taking an active part in politics, war and diplomacy." But soon after even this temporary emancipation of women of the favoured tribes ended

when they also were absorbed and assimilated into the degenerated and stagnant Abbaside social milieu. Thus even the influx of new tribes failed to revive the family and social life of the Abbasides, and rid them of the vicious, anti-social customs and institutions. In short the women of the Medieval Muslim society lost all social respect and dynamism. Instead, they had only social exchange value, like the dumb and mute cattle. They were passed on by their master from hand to hand, if they were slave, or by easy and quick divorce, if they were free and duly-wedded wives, for the Ulema had empowered the husbands to divorce their wives without any rhyme or reason.

The Tribes. Vast regions of the Abbaside Empire were still inhabited by the tribes. They lived their primitive social life with their age-old social organisation and economic occupation of rearing the camels, goats or sheep in their nomadic wanderings. Vast deserts in Arabia, Syria, Egypt and North Africa and the barren mountains of Persia ahd Khursasan were still inhabited by numerous tribes, mostly of Arabian, Berber or Turkish descent.

Disintegrative Role of Tribalism in Medieval Islam. Yet one significant change had come in the role and place of the tribes in the social and political history of the Abbaside period. During the Orthodox period the Arabian tribes and system played a dynamic role in the conquest and consolidation of the early Islamic State and Empire. This remained true to some extent even under the Umayyads. But during the Abbaside period, the tribes played definitely a disruptive and destructive role. Their tribal organisation found no constructive place in the social and economic system of the Abbasides, while their predatory instincts and uuruly habits were a constant source of political troubles and economic disturbance. Thanks to the Sisyphean cycles in Medieval Islam, every new tribe supplanted the older ones from the government and socio-economic benefits, and thus turned them into rebels and robbers. In this way the disfranchised Arab tribes of South Iraq, Syria and Hijaz became so discontented with the Abbaside rule that they became fanatical followers of the Qaramita, plundering and destroying everything that came in their way. The worst example of the tribal ravages was that of the two Bedouin tribes of Hilal and Sulaim. In about the middle of the eleventh century, they burst out of Upper Egypt over the province of Qayrowan. They ravaged and plundered it so thoroughly that North Africa never regained its former prosperity. "In Tunisia and the West", write Ibn Khaldun, "since the Hilal and Sulaim passed that way at the beginning of the fifth century (the eleventh century

A. D.) and devastated these countries, for three hundred and fifty years all the plains were ruined; whereas formerly from the Sudan to the Mediterranean all was cultivated, as is proved by the traces remaining there of fountains, buildings, farms and villages." Thus tribalism became one of the greatest causes of destruction, stagnation and backwardness of the Medieval Islamic society and state. The Mongol tribes gave a fatal blow to them. In the long run, the Abbaside society crumbled to pieces before the predatoriness of its internal tribalism, for in the interplay of the Desert and the Sown, it falied to harness the tribes and assimilate them into its feudal economy. Indeed, vast cultivated areas again turned into barren wastes. The invasion of the Mongol tribes, the external tribalism, gave a *coup de grace* to a decadent and moribund society and economy.

The Sisyphean fate of the Abbaside society. The Abbaside society had a long history of five centuries and passed through great changes and vicissitudes. Though it had a period of progress and development during the first two or three centuries, yet this progress was not uniform and universal throughout the length and breadth of the Empire, and it stopped altogether after the decline of the Seljuqs at the end of the eleventh century. Since then, it revealed its weakness and backwardness more and more. It had no social solidarity. It was, in fact, a fragmented society, in which there was no unity, organisation and leadership by any class or section of the people. In fact, the Abbaside society was a chaotic mass of degenerated and decadent tribes, classes, towns and the like. Social relations and organisation did not extend beyond the primary kinship groups of families, tribes, town-communities, guilds or the like. Even Islam, which was a unifying and cementing force under the Orthodox, the Umayyad and the early Abbaside, failed to knit the tribes and the towns, or the tribal and feudal groups, and the mercantile communities into a single whole. In short, localism and parochialism, tribal pride and prejudice, feudal backwardness and anarchy, diminishing social frequency and dynamism, slavery and servile concubinage, harem, polygamy and such other social institutions disrupted and destroyed the unity, solidarity and development of the Abbaside society.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Dress. The dress and costumes of the people varied according to their social rank and occupation. The aristocratic classes, *i. e.*, the caliph, his courtiers, grandees and nobles, were splendidly attired in costly clothes, pearls and precious stones. They put on their heads a black, high-peaked hat, the Qalansuwah, brought into fashion by Mansur. "Wide trousers of Persian

origin, shrit, vests and jacket (quftan), with outer mantle (aba or jubbah), completed the wardrobe of a gentleman". But the professors of theology, law and judges wore a black turban and a black mantle, called Taylasan. The dress of the women varied according to their rank and position. The fashionable ladies of high rank and wealth wore for headdress a dome-shaped cap, adorened with a circlet of jewels at the bottom. This headdress was set into fashion by Ulayyah, the half-sister of Harun ar-Rashid. The middle class women generally adorned their heads wtth flat ornaments of gold, cosmetics and other artificial aids to beauty. To tint the lips and brighten the face were the widely prevalent fashions among the women.

Sports and pastimes. Some outdoor sports and many indoor games were common among the people. Among the outdoor sports and games, the most remarkable were archery, polo of the Persian fashion called *Chaugan*, hockey called *sulajan*, throwing of spears or *jarid*, horse-racing, wrestling, fencing and above all hunting and hawking. Parades and public tourneys were frequent in the public squares before the Caliph's palace in Baghdad, called the Maidan and Marabba. Among the indoor games and pastimes were, to mention a few, chess introduced by Harun, dice and nard.

In Baghdad and other big towns, frequent social gatherings and re-unions took place where the grandees, scholars and men of diverse talents assembled to talk and gossip on various things and matters of interest, to listen to music or dance and hold discussions on matters of philosophy or politics. Literary clubs also sprang up for more serious intellectual pursuits and philosophical discussions. Bookshops were not only the places of sale but also the rendezvous of scholars and intellectual classes. In spite of the fact that there was no printing press, the art of publishing books was so developed that the books were sold at comparatively cheap rate. The average price of a book was about one dinar.

Dance, Drinking and Music. The people of the Abbaside period, especially the richer and middle classes, were great lovers of the arts of music and dance. They were not unacquained with the drinking of wine—the mother of all evils, as they called it in their more sober moments. Nevertheless, alcoholic drinks were widely indulged in, both in company and in private, especially by the rich nobles and merchants. The early Abbaside Caliphs, their wives and daughters, their vizeirs and officials, the merchants and graudees patronised music, for it was not yet prohibited by Islamic injunctions, as it was at the end of the Abbaside period. The same was true of dancing. But in the middle of the Abbaside period a reaction began against them for various reasons. They were partly the over-indulgence in wine, music and dancing by the luxury-loving, aristocratic nobility, with their extravagent mode of life which

attracted the condemnation of the orthodox theologians and divines and the fanatical opposition of the pious people. But it was mainly due to the great prevalence of the servile male and female singers and dancers, who made them their hereditary profession. They brought them into social disgrace as professions of the low caste servile people. Thus began the religious injunctions against them which condemned the noble arts of music and dance as unworthy of the pious and the noble.

Manners and morals. The Muslim of the Abbaside period and later put a great emphasis on the training and education of morals, manners, tastes and etiquette, in order to inculcate a proper gentlemanly behaviour in personal habits and public conduct. Such a training and education was called "*adab*." It was a very comprehensive term which meant many things, such as a polite behaviour, gentle manners and clean habits, and also a literary education and taste for appreciating poetry and literature. For instance, a man of culture or "*adab*" would be one who possessed polite manners, manly virtues, elegant behaviour ; he would talk little, laugh less and never cut jokes. When he sat at table, he would eat slowly in small mouthfuls and would not lick his fingers and avoid eating garlic and onions. We describe here the whole sphere of the social frequency of an Abbaside middle class man which will illustrate both its attractive features and also its restricted and non-dynamic nature. The daily life of a gentleman began early morning, with prayers. Then he retired for rest for some time and after a brief repast, he repaired to a public bath, from where he returned to his residence in the afternoon, to pray and to study. In the evening he went out to meet his friends or welcome them at his own house, when cultured talks or learned discussions took place, which concluded with the meals at night, when he retired to bed.

Architecture : Palaces of Baghdad. The Abbaside Caliphs were great builders. They constructed palaces, mosques, madrasahs and other public buildings in Baghdad and elsewhere. They even founded new cities, like Baghdad, Samarra, Rafiqa near Raqqah. Mansur built the Round City of Baghdad, with the caliphal palace in the centre, called the Golden Gate (*Bab al-Dhahab*), and the Palace of Eternity or *Qasr al-Khuld* and the Rasafah Palace, for his son and successor, Mahdi. When Samarra became the temporary capital, it literally became a city of palaces. When Mutazid (892-902) again transferred the capital to Baghdad, he constructed two new palaces called "al-Surayya" and "at-Taj," on which he spent 4 lakh dinars (about Rs. 40 lakhs), completed by his son and successor, Muktafi (902-8). Later, al-Muqtadir (908-32) built a unique mansion, called the Hall of Tree or *Dar ul-Shajarah*, on account of the gold and silver tree that stood in its pond. When the Buwayhids rose to power, they added more splendid edifices. Muizz-ud-

Daula (949-67) built a palace called *al-Muizziyah*, which cost ten lakh dinars. The viziers and grandees also constructed palaces and mansions in the capital. The Barmakids built palaces in the eastern quarters of Baghdad, which were later confiscated by Harun and became caliphal residences. These splendid edifices, however, vanished into ruins partly due to the ravages of time, but mainly due to the ravages, of the wars and civil wars and above all, due to the fires and plunderings of the Mongols of Halaku Khan in 1258.

Other buildings outside Baghdad were the palaces at Samarra and the Central Mosque of al-Mutawakkil (847-61) which he constructed at a cost of 7,000,000 dinars.

Painting, caligraphy and other industrial arts flourished under the Abbasides.

ECONOMIC LIFE

Agriculture. Early Abbasides devoted great care and attention to the promotion of agriculture in all parts of their empire. They fully realised that its strength depended upon its agricultural prosperity : the greater the agricultural production, the more their revenues. Indeed, they geared their administrative machinery to this end. They built canals or repaired and redug old ones and drained the marshes. The Arab geographers tell us of the caliphs digging or opening "rivers" as they called the canals. Abu Yusuf, the Chief Qazi of Harun ar-Rashid, declared that digging canals for the promotion of agriculture was one of the functions of the state. A veritable network of canals existed in almost all the provinces of the Empire, especially in the home province of Lower Iraq or as-Sawad, in Khurasan, Egypt, Syria and Persia, which transformed them into five "earthly paradises". Thus the farms and villages in all parts of the empire, which were deserted and ruined during the anarchy and misgovernment of the last days of the Umayyad Caliphate, were rehabilitated and restored to prosperity under the early Abbasides. For instance, Lower Iraq, which was a troubled province under the Umayyads, became a peaceful and prosperous province, filled with farms and orchards, canals and flourishing villages and townships, with Baghdad standing amidst them, the most prosperous of them all. A network of canals intersected the whole province, linking its two rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, and supplying abundant water to its farms, villages and towns. These canals were, from north to south, *Nahr Isa* named after a relative of Mansur, and its main branch the *Nahr Sarah*, both of which irrigated Baghdad and the country around it : the *Nahr Sarsar*, which irrigated lands to the north of Madain: the *Nahr al-Malik*, which flowed to the south of Madain : the *Nahr Kutha* and the *Great Sarah*, which branched off into a number of irrigation

channels; the *Nahr Dujayl* which irrigated the lands around Qadisiyah; and the *Nahr al-Silah*, dug by Mahdi, which irrigated the lands around Wasit. Besides these main canals, there were innumerable smaller ones in and around Kufa, Basra and other towns in Lower Iraq The same was the case in Khurasan and Transoxiana, in Khuzistan or South Persia and around Damascus and in Egypt. The prosperity of these provinces can be judged from the accounts of their huge revenues recorded by various writers, geographers and historians of the Abbaside period.

The staple crops of Iraq were wheat, barley, rice dates, sesame, cotton and flax, while its fruits and vegetables were nut, oranges, egg-plants, sugar-cane and flowers were roses and violets. The staple produce of Khurasan and Syria and Persia were the fruits and vegetables of the cooler regions, like apples, apricots, peaches, plums, lemons, oranges, figs, grapes, olives, almonds, radishes, water-melons, roses, etc. Owing to their love for perfumes, various kinds of attars were manufactured, especially of roses. In the hilly regions of these provinces water-wheels or mills were frequently used, in order to irrigate the farmstead. They were worked by the flow of the fast-moving streams and waterchannels. With the decline of the Caliphate, however, the irrigational canals and channels were neglected or destroyed by their internal or foreign enemies and invaders, and many flourishing villages and towns were ruined and deserted. Thus huge populations perished and the Sown turned into the Desert once again. This was particularly the fate of Iraq and Khurasan after the terrible ravages of the Mongol hordes. They never recovered their former prosperity down to the recent times.

Industry. Extensive industry flourished throughout the length and breadth of the Abbaside Empire. It was hand-operated industry, in which manufacture was carried on by manual labour, mainly of the slaves, in the mines and workshops. The factories were really manufactories in which many workers and artisans worked under the supervision of overseers, who either owned the manufactories or were financed by rich masters and merchants. Some of these manufactories, especially in Baghdad, were owned by the Caliphs and produced goods for the royal court and household. There was, indeed, a great variety of manufactured goods, produced in different parts of the Empire. Among them the most important were the cotton, silk, and woollen textile, carpets, paper, soap, glass, pottery, pearls and jewels, ornaments, and the mining of various kinds of metals and minerals, such as iron in Khurasan, lead and silver in Karman, marble in Tabriz, and bitumen and naphtha in Georgia. Paper-manufacturing industry exised in Egypt, Baghdad and in the cities of Khurasan ; glass and soap manufactories in Basra, Baghdad,

and in Kashan : Sidon and Tyre in Syria ; mosaic industry in Damascus and silk manufacture in Kufa, Tustar ; carpets were woven almost everywhere and the cotton fabrics in many towns and cities, but especially in Baghdad, Tustar, Damascus, Damietta and Tinnis in Egypt ; woollen cloths in Shiraz ; table cloths, sofas, lamps, chandeliers, vases, earthenware and kitchen utinsels were made in Egypt and Syria ; and jewels and perfumes were made in Baghdad, etc. In short, every city in the empire had its own speciality in industrial manufacture, which bore witness to the great prosperity of the Abbaside Caliphate. But when the period of decline began, the industrial life and prosperity suffered grieviously from the ravges and predatoriness of the internal and external foes of the Caliphate.

Trade and Commerce. Abbaside Caliphate was really a great commercial civilisation, based on a widespread home and foreign trade This extensive commercial activity was rendered possible by the highly productive agriculture and industry at home, the products of which were exchanged or bartered with foreign goods. A far-flung network of trade roads and routes linked the innumerable commercial cities and market-towns in all the provinces of the Empire, where rich and flourishing merchants, traders, producers and artisans dwelt. Caravans of camels and mules traversed these routes in various directions all the year round, for the early Abbasides had established a firm administration and good conditions of peace and security of life and property. The extensive home and foreign commerce were necessitated by the high standards of comfort and luxury, civilisation and culture, which the peoples of the Abbaside Caliphate, especially the feudal aristocracy and the rich mercantile communities, had attained. At first, most of the traders and merchants were non-Muslims, such as the Jews, Christians, Zoroasterians, etc. But afterwards many Muslim Arabs, Persians and others took to trade and commerce. They did not feel the same dislike or repugnance for trade as they had for farming or cultivation, Foodgrains, fruits, silk and woollen and cotten cloth, paper, glass manufactures, lamps, jewels, pearls and precious stones and countless other goods and articles of luxury were transported from the producing centres in various parts of the Empire to the centres of aristocracy and riches, like Baghdad and other rich towns and cities.

Four Routes of International Commerce. A remarkable feature of the Abbaside commercial life was its extensive international trade, which was carried on with almost all the countries, kingdoms and territories around the Empire from Spain in the west to distant China in the east, and from remote Russia and Poland in the

north to the Malaya, Ceylon and the Dark Africa in the south. This trade followed several routes both across land and sea. We shall mention here four of them which are most famous. Firstly, the North East Land Route, also famous as "the great silk way", which started from the famous commercial cities of Khurasan and Transoxiana, like Balkh, Bukhara and Samarkand, crossed Kashgar and Chinese Turkistan and reached the western regions of China, from where silk, paper and other Chinese curiosities were brought. One of the offshoots of the North East Route branched off to Ghazni and Indo-Pakistan. The second land route was the North West Route which linked the northern provinces of the Caliphate to the remote lands of Russia, Poland and even Sweden. It commenced from Khurasan and the Caspian regions, went to Khwarizm and the river valleys of South Russia, like the Volga, and reached as far as the Danube in Central Europe and the commercial "free cities" on the coast of the Baltic Sea. The discovery of Abbaside coins in Poland, Sweden, etc,, bear testimony to this extensive trade. On this route, Russian goods such as fur, wax, honey etc., were exchanged for silk, cotton and linen. In the south was the famous sea route, which started from Basra and Siraf in the Persian Gulf and after reaching the Arabian Sea branched off into two directions, one going towards Daibul, Ceylon, the Malay Archepeligo and as far as China, and even Korea and Japan, while the second went towards East Africa, as for as Madagascar. From Basra the goods were transported to Baghdad across the river Tigris. The tale of this great trade has been immortalised in the stories of the legendary *Sindbad the Sailor* in the **Arabian Nights.** Its historical figures were the great merchants and mariners, like the famous Sulaiman at-Tajir who lived in about 850, Ibn Rusta (900 A.D.) and Abu Zayd (950 A.D.) who were not only merchants but also great navigators. Some of these merchants "spent their lives on the water". Indeed, the Muslim merchants and sailors had reached South China as early as 787 A. D., where Canton became their commercial base. They had invented the mariner's compass and chalked out the maps of the sea-routes. They carried with them dates, sugar. cotton and woollen fabrics, steel tools and glassware, while they imported spices, camphor, cinnamon, wood, coconuts, musk, silk and spices from the Far East and South Asia, and ivory, ebony and negro slaves from Africa. The fourth trade route started from Fustat, Cairo and Alexandria and became sea-borne trade across the Mediterranean into Sicily, Spain and other lands around the Mediterranean. It also followed two land routes : one across North Africa to Qayrowan and beyond and to the remote south into Sudan and Central Africa. This trade route, however, did not flourish much, due to the militant hostility of European Christendom and, in the south, due to the inaccessibility of Central Africa.

Guilds and Corporations. "Nothing was more foreign", writes Von Kremer, "or distasteful to the Asiatic mind than a severely centralised government. Every hamlet, every town, indeed, conducted its own affairs by itself, and the government only interfered when it was insubordinate." One of the remarkable features of the Abbaside industry and trade was the prevalence of craft-guilds and mercantile corporations in every industry, craft, trade or profession. They were called the *Isnaf* or craft-guilds and *Diwan ash-Shura* or mercantile corporations and councils, which existed in almost every town and trade. These guilds and corporations were like those which existed in the contemporary, medieval, Europe. Only they were more rigidly restricted to kinship members and had more restricted powers than the guilds in Europe where they had much wider membership and powers to control and regulate industry. The guilds regulated their own trade, industrial activities, conditions of work and wages, recruitment and training, etc. The town-corporations, Diwan ash-Shura, were local self-governing bodies. Most of the local officials were chosen from among their members. Only a few officials were appointed or represented the central government of the Caliph, such as a Mohtasib, a Qazi, etc. In fact, these towns and cities were really semi-independent principalities. In the heyday of Abbaside Caliphate this municipal self-government and independence was good for the health, vigour and dynamism of economic and industrial and commercial life. But when the decline and anarchy began, it became a prolific source of parochialism, mutual rivalries, extortions, disruption and stagnation of economic life.

1. Von Kremer, *Orient under the Caliphs* p. 238.

Chapter 30

RELIGION, THEOLOGY AND LEARNING UNDER THE ABBASIDES

In a previous chapter, we had depicted two kinds of religious movements among the Muslims under the Umayyad Caliphs, namely, a particular and a general religious movement. The particular movement produced Shiaism and its two sects, the moderate Imami sect, and the extremist Ghaliya sects. These two trends in Shiaism continued with marked distinctions and great consequences under the Abbasides, who had, indeed, as we have explained above in detail, come to power on the pretext of restoring the legitimate claims of the *Ahl al Bayt* to the headship or sovereignty of the Muslim community or state. Thus the Shia sects, whether moderate or extremist, had, under the Abbasides, an inclination to mix religion with politics. On the contrary, the general religious movement had no political bias or penchant as such, expect that it got entangled in a politico-theological controversy under Mamun and his two successors. They had adopted the Mutazilite doctrines, which came into a clash with the Orthodox Ulema. Otherwise, the Abbaside Caliphs were always anxious to be the defenders of the faith and the patrons of the Ulema, and regarded themselves as the Imams or spiritual leaders of the Muslim community.

Once the Abbasides were firmly in power, they began to favour the rationalist movement of the Mutazila and the Shia Imams. Shiaite revolts broke out in several provinces of the Abbaside Caliphate in the Tenth century, which led to the rise of the Shiaite Fatimids in Egypt and the Buwayhids at Baghdad. It was the century of the Shia, the highest level mark ever reached by the tide of this particular religious movement in the history of Islam. In theology a reaction had already begun, led by Asharism and the Mutakalimun or the orthodox theologians in their contest with the Mutazila. So the Eleventh century saw the final emergence and dominance of Sunnism as the majority religion of the Muslims under the patronage of the Seljuqids. Shiaism, both extremist or Ismailian and moderate, remained confined to certain isolated regions in the Abbaside Caliphate. In the meanwhile, the general religious movement blossomed out into many forms and shapes, such as the speculative or philosophical theology of the Mutakalimun, in the *Fiqh and Sharia* schools, in the Tafsir or commentaries of the Quran, the collection of Ahadith or Traditions of the Holy

Prophet (Sm) and in the founding of *madrasahs* or colleges for the study and teaching of Islamic (Sunnite) religious sciences.

We shall first begin with Shiaism and its particularistic movements and sects.

MODERATE SHIAISM

Its History. The first great sect of Islam which came into being during the Abbaside period was Shiaism. The Shi'ites were divided into two main sects, moderate and the extremist. The moderate Shias were differently known as the *Athna-Ashariyya* (the Twelvers, for they recognised twelve Imams) or simply the *Imamiyya*. Their Twelve Imams were direct descendants of Hazrat Ali and Fatima or the Ahl-al-Bayt. They were:

Hazrat Ali (died 661 A. D.).

Imam Hasan (died 670 A. D).

Imam Husyan (died 680 A. D.).

Ali Zayn-ul-Abideen bin Husayn (died 712 A. D.).

Muhammad al-Baqir bin Ali (712-34).

Jafar as-Sadiq (734-65).

Musa al-Kazim (765-99).

Ali ar-Raza (799-818).

Muhammad at-Taqi (818-35).

Ali an-Naqi (835-68).

Hasan al-Askari (868-73).

Muhammad al-Mahdi (The last Imam of the Twelvers, who became the Hidden Imam, as he vanished in 873).

The Moderate Shias did not evolve any new doctrine during the Abbaside period. They did not differ much from the Orthodox sects, except in upholding the legitimist claims to caliphate or headship of Islam for their Imams, mentioned above. At first, as we have already said, the Abbaside pretenders like Ibrahim and as-Saffah, claimed to be fighting against the Umayyads in order to restore the caliphate to the Ahl-al-Bayt. But once they were firmly in power, they repudiated all such pretense. This led to a bitter war, mostly of words, between the Abbasides and the Alides. But the then Imams, like Jafar and Musa, kept

themselves aloof from politics, in spite of the various Alide revolts against Mansur and Harun. When Mamun came to the throne, he attempted to restore the caliphate to the then living Imam Ali ar-Riza, for he sought thus to gain support for the Abbaside rule from people of Shi'ite sympathies. He married his daughter to Ali and declared him heir to the caliphate. But Ali died a year later in 818 in mysterious circumstances, on the road to Baghdad. The Twelfth Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi, the Guided One, also died in mysterious circumstances. The majority of the Shia, however, believe that he is hidden and would one day return and lead the faithful to the path of righteousness. He has, therefore, become the Imam Ghaib or Hidden Imam of the moderate Shia.

It must be noticed that these Imams were, in their lifetime, politically insignificant personalities. Jafar as-Sadiq, who lived in the last days of the Umayyad rule, when it was tottering to fall, dabbled in politics and hoped to be chosen as a ruler. But his hopes were dashed when the Abbasides seized power. These Imams had, however no large following, though their cause had won much sympathies.

Shia Doctrine of Imamat. According to all sects of Shiaism, *imamat* or leadership of the Muslim community belonged to Hazrat Ali, because he alone possessed the attribute necessary for such a leadership, viz., knowledge or *ilm*, by means of which he could solve all the problems of the Muslim community. After Ali's death, the divine knowledge which he possessed descended by heredity to his and Fatimah's children, the Ahl-al-Bayt. That is why they alone had the claim to be imams or amir al-momineen of the Islamic state. Moreover, owing to their divine knowledge, and charismatic personality, they alone could redress the grievances of the Muslims, and they alone had the power to interpret the Quran.

The emphasis on the charismatic aspects of the Shia Imam's knowledge and personality led to further developments of this doctrine in the hands of the Shi'ites of the Abbaside period, such as the doctrine of al-Mahdi or Messiah and to the deifications of Ali and some of his other descendants by the ghaliya or extremist Shia sects.

Moreover, as the Imam's knowledge was infallible or free from error, the Shia doctrine of imamat attracted such peopel and parties as sought to establish an autocratic monarchy.

The evolution of the moderate Shia doctrine took pefinite shape by the end of the Ninth century of the Christian era.

ISMAILISM OR EXTREMIST SHIAISM AND ITS OFFSHOOTS

From the very beginning, the particularist Shia movement was inclined to split up into moderate and extremist sects as was shown by the sectarian activities of Abdullah bin Sabah during the caliphate of Uthman and the revolt of al-Mukhtar during the second civil war on the death of Yezid I. But the extremist Shia tendencies took a definite form during the early years of the Abbaside Caliphate, when a new Shia sect, the Sabiyya or the sect of the Seveners came into being. It recognised as *imams* only seven descendants of Ali and Fatimah, that is, the first six imams of the Moderate Shiaites and Ismail, a son of Jafar as-Sadiq, the sixth imam of the Moderates. He was an ambitious man and on some dispute broke away from his father in about 760, in order to found a revolutionary movement out of the discontended and oppressed peoples in the Abbaside Empire. His followers came to be called Ismailians, after him.

Ismailism was essentially a series of revolutionary movements, namely, the Carmathian, the Fatimid and the Assassin. These movements arose from the conditions of oppression and exploitation of the poor and oppressed classes of labourers, artisans and other underprivileged sections of the Abbaside slave-owning, feudal society, which was disintegrating and decaying during the ninth and tenth centuries. In such a revolutionary situation, the various kinds of Ismailian leaders came forward with their messianic messages of hope and succour. These leaders had a genius for organisation, based on two principles : (*i*) obedience to one's superiors within the movement, and (*ii*) the belief that the commands from one's superiors came ultimately from the Imam himself, who was infallible.

As we have said above, the Ismailians split up into various sects, each of which played a great, and even revolutionary role in the history of the disintegration and fall of the Abbaside Caliphate. They were (1) the Fatimids of Egypt, (2) the Qaramita or Carmathians of Basra and Bahrayn, and (3) the Batiniyya or Assassins of Hasan as-Saba. All three sects are variously known as the Batinis, for they laid stress on the "*batin*" or "hidden meaning" or esotericism; the *Taleemi*, for they declared that "true teaching" or "taleem" could be obtained only through the living Imam; or the *Sabi*, that is, the followers of the Seven Imams. But to their moderate Shia co-religionists and their Orthodox rivals, they were simply known as the *Malahida* or the Impious Heretics or worst still, the *Zindiqs*.

Their Doctrines. (1) *The Doctrine of Numbers.* The Ismailians of various sects might well be regarded as the Pythagoreans of

Islam, for their religious doctrines revolved around numbers, *viz.*, the *seven*, the *twelve*, and to a lesser extent, the *two*, the *five* and the *nine*. They saw these numbers in the Heavens and on the earth, in the prophets and the Imams, in the bones of human body and face, and in "grades of life or existence", etc. Thus they taught that there were seven Prophets, from Adam to Muhammad—not the Holy Prophet, who is only the sixth prophet according to their reckoning but Muhammad bin Ismail bin Jafar as-Sadiq. Each prophet had seven Imams. Each Imam had twelve Hujjats or Chief Da'is, and so on.

(2) *The Doctrine of Esotericism or Taweel and Taleem.* Like all Shias, the Ismailians also believed that a man is unable to know Truth without the aid of an Imam. But they went to an extreme by asserting that the Imam could interpret the 'hidden meanings' by Taweel or allegorical interpretation. And whatever the Imam "teaches" is the Truth or Taleem *par excellence*, which a believer has to accept unquestioningly. The Imam of the age is the chosen representative of God on earth and the sole repository of this Hidden Science or Truth. He could, of course, reveal it to his Da'is, while the Da'is, in their turn, with necessary modifications, could communicate it to their common followers.

Degrees of Initiation and Propaganda. The Truth could, of course, be revealed to the followers in various degrees of initiation, which were nine in numbers. The whole Truth could be disclosed only to those who had ascended to the highest degree of initiation, the Chief Da'is, and the like. When a person wished or showed signs of the desire to adopt the Ismailian faith, he was required first to take an oath of allegiance to his Ismailian propagandist or local "da'i". He then became a neophyte, when he was "taught" the doctrine of Numbers and its spiritual significance. Then began the Second Degree when the neophyte was taught the Inner Doctrine that all Truth comes from the Imam. In the Third Degree he was taught the Inner Knowledge of the Ismailism and its Imams. At this stage, he was made to bid adieu to Islam as such. In the Fourth Degree he was definitely detached from Islam and was taught to accept Muhammad bin Ismail as the real prophet. During the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Degrees the same education continued, till in the Eighth and Nineth Degree the full-fledged Ismaili, if he at all went so far or so high, had renounced all Islam, even all religion and had joined the Inner Circle of the Chief Da'is. He was "now a philosopher pure and simple, free to adopt such system or admixture of systems as may be most to his taste."

This was the Ismailism of the Fatimids, the Qaramita and the Assassins. Obviously, it was not a sect of Islam but a doctrine of revolt against it, whose political effects on the history of Islam we

have already noticed in previous chapters.

THE MUTAZILA

History of Mutazila. The Shia sects had turned the political questions into their particularistic religious doctrines and beliefs, and their religious controversies into politics. The origin of the Mutazila was amidst the non-political environment of the general religious movement. It came to be concerned, then, with the theological discussions over the question of a sinner and his punishment, as we have explained in an earlier chapter. With such questions began speculative or philosophical theology in early Medieval Islam, *i.e.*, at the end of the Umayyad and the beginning of the Abbaside period. Thus the Mutazila provoked a profound religious controversy among the Muslims, which had, of course, political overtones when Mamun and his two successors Motasim and Wathiq, adopted Mutazila doctrines as a state religion and instituted the *Mihna* or inquisition against the Orthodox Ulema. Later, when the Orthodox reaction began under al-Mutawakkil, the Mutazila became a persecuted sect. It had a temporary come-back under the Shi'ite Buwayhids, only to be permanently suppressed after the fall of the Buwayhids, when the Orthodox Sunnism was firmly and finally established as the dominant form of Islamic religion in the Eleventh century under the Sunnite Seljuqids. This was the result of the great controversy between Rationalism in religious matters, for which the Mutazila stood, and conformism for which the Orthodox divines and theologians, the Sunni Ulema, stood.

Influence of Greek Philosophy. It may be remarked that the Mutazila arose due to strictly indigenous causes, namely the rigid predestinarianism of the Kharijis and the tolerant liberalism of the Murjites. The Mutazilities took a middle position between these two extremes of interpreting Islamic belief and practice. But what distinguished the Mutazilites from other theological disputants was their discussion of Islamic dogmas in the terms of Greek philosophical conceptions. The Mutazilite scholars and theologians were deeply influenced by the writings of the ancient Greek philosophers, especially Aristotle, whose books were increasingly translated into Arabic from the very beginning of the Abbaside period. However, the Mutazilites were not interested in philosophy for the sake of philosophy, as the philosophers were, but to explain Islamic dogmas in philosophical conceptions and methods. From the Greek philosophy they borrowed two things in particular: firstly, its dialectics or method of reasoning, based on propositions or questions and their refutations by counter-questions, and so on till rational explanation was reached, which became the dogma as upheld by them. This dialectical method was called "*kalām*" in Arabic, translated from the Greek term "*logos*" meaning discourse. For this reason the Muta-

zilites were also styled as "*Ahl al-Kalam*". Secondly, they borrowed from Greek philosophy its metaphysics of essence and existence, and the Aristotelian doctrine of substance and accidents. In short, the Mutazilites endeavoured to reconcile religion with reason and faith with philosophy, and naturally attracted all minds which were not inclined towards unquestioning conformism.

Basra and Baghdad Schools of Mutazila. As we have said above, the Mutazila originated in the discussions which Hasan al-Basri used to hold in the Mosque of Basra, on the question of whether a grave sinner was a believer or not. The Kharijis declared that he was not and therefore would be sent to hell, while the liberal and tolerant Murjites declared that he was a believer. This question was once put to Hasan al-Basri. But Before he could reply, one of his pupils, named Wasil ibn Ata (and according to another tradition, Qatada and still another man, Amr ibn Ubayd) declared that the grave sinner was in an "intermediate position". He then withdrew from the circle around Hasan al-Basri to explain his views to others who gathered around him. At this, Hasan al-Basri is said to have remarked "He has withdrawn (i'tazala) from us". This remark became the name of Wasil ibn Ata's views and of those who followed him. As this story implied, the Mutazilities were really those who held a neutral position in theological controversies, which began to arise in the 8th and 9th centuries under the Abbasides. They held themselves aloof from politico-religious fighting over these issues, holding "intermediate positions" in such disputes and controversies. The intermediate position or *al-manzila bayn al manzilatayn* became one of the five doctrines of the Mutazila.

Four men were the founders of the Mutazilite philosophical theology. They were Mu'ammar (or Ma'mar), Ab'ul Hudhayl, also known as al-Allaf, and an-Nazzam at Basra and Bishr ibn al-Mu'tamir at Baghdad. They flourished during the early period of the Abbaside Caliphate. Abu'l Hudhayl, for instance, participated in the symposium on love, held in 803, as described by the historian al-Masudi. Bishr was said to be imprisoned by Harun ar-Rashid for his Shi'ite sympathies. When Mamun adopted Mutazila doctrines, the Mutazilities became a government party at Baghdad, persecuting by their "Mihna" or inquisition those theologians and others who opposed their doctrine that the Quran was created.

Mutazilite Doctrines. The Mutazila was known for its five doctrines, as its basic teachings on Islamic dogma. They are as below :

1. *The Doctrine of Unity or Tauhid*. The Mutizilites laid a

special emphasis on the conception of God's Oneness or Tauhid, which they interpreted with strict logic. God is one. He is eternal. He is not anthropomorphic, that is, no human qualities, like justice, mercy, wisdom, power, can be attributed to Him. His attributes are identical with His Essence. From this conception of Unity or Tauhid, the Mutazilities inferred two conclusions or principles, which were bitterly attacked by their Sunni opponents. Firstly, they denied that the Quranic use of such terms as "hand of God" or His "face", meant the same kind of 'hand' or 'face' as of human beings. God has Essence but no corporeal existence and could not be seen by human eye. Secondly, God alone is eternal, while all else is created and not eternal. From this they concluded that the Quran is also created and not eternal. It was a work of God and not a Word of God. To prove its created nature, the Mutazilities quoted a Quranic verse: "We have made it (*ja'lana-hu*) an Arabic Quran" (43.3/2). They argued that this 'making' implied creating. They also quoted other versus which seemed to imply that the Quran was created after something else, e. g., the verse : "We shall tell thee tidings of what has preceded." (20.99) On the other hand, their critics quoted other Quranic verses, which would arraign them of idolatry when they asserted it to be a created thing. For example, God addresses Moses thus : "I am thy Lord". Now if this was also created, then Moses must have been guilty of idolatry in accepting this created thing as his Lord.

However, from their belief in the createdness of the Quran, the Mutazilities made an important inference that it could be interpreted by Reason and is not to be accepted with unquestioning faith and conformism. Thus they asserted their rational freedom in matters of faith and dogma of Islam. For this reason they were bitterly attacked by their Orthodox critics.

2. The Principle of Adl or Justice. Their second cardinal principle was that of *Adl* or Justice. They insisted so much on these two principles that they called themselves as "*Ahl at-Tauhid wa'l Adl*"—the partisans of Unity and Justice. They maintained that God was just and could not do evil, because that would be unjust. Indeed, justice is a categorical imperative which binds God Himself. God wills only good and not evil. If evil exists in the world, it is willed by man himself, for he has free will and is, therefore, responsible for his actions. God will, however, punish His creatures for their evil actions, for they have freedom of will to do good. Hence the sinners will be punished for their sins by God and there is no intercession of prophets and saints on behalf of the sinners.

The central point at issue in their Doctrine of Adl or Righteousness was the relation of God to man's ultimate destiny. i.e.,

paradise or hell. By insisting on human freedom and responsibility, the Mutazilites made man's ultimate destiny to depend on himself, for God, by His revelation has shown man what he ought to do to attain Paradise, and then left it to man himself to do it or not to do it. If he did what he was told, he would be rewarded with Paradise in life after death ; but if did not, he would be sent to Hell as his punishment. With this belief in God's justice, the Mutazilites inferred their doctrine of *al-wa'd wa'l wa'id* the doctrine of Promise and Threat of Paradise and Hell.

What about children ? In course of time, the doctrine of Adl or Righteousness got the Mutazilites involved into contradictions. It was, of course, a man's freedom of will and responsibility to obey God or not and be rewarded with Paradise or punished with Hell accordingly. Indeed, they presupposed that God was bound to reward or punish in this way. But a question arose : What about children who have died in infancy? As they died in infancy, they had committed no sin. Should they not go to Paradise? But, if they went to Paradise, they had not earned it by their obedience. Was such a reward fair to others? Could not God, for instance, will a sinner to die in infancy and thereby reward him with Paradise, instead of Hell to which he was punished by God for He allowed him to live to sinful adulthood? These were the questions with which the critics of the Mutazilities, such as al-Ash'ari, assailed them, as we shall see presently in the story of the three brothers.

3. **Doctrine of al-Wa'd wa'l Wa'id.** The third doctrine of the Mutazilite theology was that of Promise of Paradise for those who believed and Threat of punishing with Hell to the sinners. It was derived from the Doctrine of Adl or Righteousness, from which the Mutazilites inferred the two apparently contradictory principles of free will and predestination. These were, however, social and ethical principles which showed their spirit of compromise between the predestinarian Kharijism and the liberal Murjism.

4. **The Principle of al-Manzilah bayn al-Manzilatayn or the doctrine of intermediate position.** It was a political principle of compromise which they applied to Muslims who committed sins. Accordingly, a sinner is a *fajir* or an unchaste man. The Kharijites declared that a *fajir* was a *kafir* and was eternally damned. The Mutazilites declared that a *fajir* was neither a believer nor an unbeliever, but was in a special category, which they called "*al Manzilah bayn al-Manzilatayn*" or the intermediate position. The Mutazilities were known to the people in general by this doctrine more than by any other.

5. **The Doctrine of al-Amr bi'l-Ma'ruf wa'l Nahi an al-Munkar.** It was the fifth doctrine of the Mutazila, commanding what is

approved, which meant the beliefs and teachings of the Mutazilites themselves, and of forbidding what is disapproved, which also meant what they themselves disapproved. From this doctrine they inferred their principle of persecuting those who did not accept Mutazilite doctrines, called "*Mihna*" or inquisition. It led to the persecution of the Orthodox Ulema by Mamun, Motasim and Wathiq, who were converted to Mutazilite faith. It became the beginning of the end of the Mutazilites, for their intolerance and Inquisition aroused the fanatical opposition of the Orthodox Ulema and mobs, during the reign of al-Mutawakkil (847—61), and after.

The End of Mutazilism. Besides the five doctrines, mentioned above, the great contribution of the Mutazilites was their belief in reason *aql* and action. They maintained that there were no eternal laws for human action. One must not obey the laws of religion blindly but should reflect and apply them with reason (*aql*). Even revelation should be subject to reason. The Mutazilites declared that the Quran was created (*makhluq*), a work of God and not his Word, which is, however, eternal and cannot be encampassed in a revelation which is limited by time. Being created, the Quranic injunctions were not eternal but could be understood by reason (*aql*) and modified according to the changing circumstances. Their belief in rational freedom and in the createdness of Quran were severely criticised by the Hanbali, Ash'ari and other Orthodox Ulema.

Mutazilism was at the height of its popularity during the middle of the ninth century A.D. third century A.H. when three leading Mutazilites lived in Baghdad, namely, Jafar ibn al-Mubashir (died 848), Jafar Ibn Harb (died 850) and al-Iskafi (died 854). At this time, the Mutazilite doctrine that God must do what is best (*islah*) for men became very popular in Baghdad. The story of three brothers, mentioned below, was intended to criticise this doctrine of the Mutazila. The last great Mutazilite thinkers was Al-Jubba'i (850-915), who lived in Basra. The decline and end of Mutazilism was not only due to the Orthodox persecutions, but also due to the age of degeneracy and disintegration at the end of the Seljuqid rule, which made all intellectual inquiry and pursuit so irrelevant and unwelcome to the decadent and tradistionalistic mind of the Medieval Muslims.

Ilm al-Kalam or the Scholastic Theology of Sunnism. The later history of the Mutazila is closely linked with the prolonged controversy between Rationalism and Orthodoxy, championed by the Mutazila and the scholastic Sunni Ulema, respectively. They were called the *Mutakallimeen* or the Orthodox dialecticians. Among them

the most famous were Imam Hanbal, Abu'l Hasan Ali al-Ash'ari (died 935 A. D.) and Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazāli (1058-1111 A. D.). The Orthodox Ulema turned the weapons of the Mutazilites, *viz.*, Greek philosophy and logic, against them. But in the long run, they turned the scales against the Mutazilites by using their third weapon, *viz.*, political authority and persecution. Caliph al-Mutawakkil and his successors became the ardent champions of Orthodoxy and persecuted the free thinking, rationalistic Mutazilites with fire and sword, till they vanished from the pages of history. Here we are concerned, not with the political but with the religious and philosophical aspects of this controversy between Rationalism and Orthodoxy in Medieval Islam. It gave rise to the *Ilm al-Kalām* or *Ilm al-Tauhid*, the speculative theology of Sunnism. Its function, according to Al-Iji, an authority on it, "is firmly to establish religious beliefs by producing proofs, and to cast aside doubts."

Origin of Asharism. "Al-Mutazila", said a pious Muslim, "carried their heads high, but their dominion ended when God sent al-Ashari" Abu'l Hasan Ali al-Ashari was born at Basra about 873 A. D. and died at Baghdad about 938 A. D., at the age of 63. At first he was a pupil of the well-known, Mutazilite teacher and theologian Abdul Wahab al-Jubbāi. But, about 912 A. D., he disagreed and separated from his teacher and renounced Mutazilaism on a problem of Free Will and Predestination. It was put in the form of a question, the Mutazilite method of reasoning or discourse (kalam).

The Story of Three Brothers. The question was really about three brothers. "Suppose" asked Al-Ashari from his teacher, "there are three brothers, one of whom is a true Believer, the second a godless Unbeliever and the third an infant who dies in childhood. They have all died. Now, what became of each of them in the next world?"

To this al-Jubbai replied ; "The first believing brother is in Paradise, the second unbelieving one is in Hell, while the third who died as a child is neither punished nor rewarded."

Al-Ashari then asked, "Suppose the brother who died young also wants to attain the high reward of Paradise and, therefore, says to God that he died in infancy for no fault of his own, but if allowed to live to adult age, he too would have attained Paradise by obeying the laws of religion."

Al-Jubbai replied, "God would say to this child-brother that He knew that if were allowed to grow to manhood, he would have been an Unbeliever and therefore punished with Hell, and,

therefore, He did not give him long life and thus saved him from Hell."

"But," interposed al-Ashari a new question, which in his view clinched the matter, "if the Unbelieving brother was to say to God that since He knew what the child would do in adult age, He also knew what he would do as well, why then did He not make him die in childhood and thus escape from the fires of Hell?"

Al-Jubbai was nonplussed and al-Ashari walked away jubilantly and denounced Mutazilaism ever afterwards. For his last question had, as he believed, finaly exploded Mutazilite doctrines of Free Will and Predestination. In place of them, al-Ashari propounded his doctrine of *Bilā Kayf* or without stating how, or unquestioning conformism. This story may or may not be historical, but it reveals the fundamental differences between the rationalist Mutazilites and the conformist Ulema, of whom al-Ashari was a leader. He showed that the Mutazilites could be refuted with their own dialectical weapon of "kalam" or disputation. He thus founded the Orthodox or Sunni scholastic theology, which in course of time became the predominant sect of Modern Islam.

Al-Ghazali.[1] Sunni theology, however, was perfected in its arguments and doctrines by Abu Hamid al-Ghazāli. For this reason, he earned from the grateful posterity the title of *Hajjat-al-Islam* or the Proof of Islam. He was born in 1058 at Tus in Khurasan. In his early age, he became so great an Orthodox scholar that Nizam ul Mulk, the great Vizier of Malik Shah, who had founded his famous Nizamiyya College at Baghdad, appointed al-Ghazāli as a Professor in it, in 1091, when he was 34 years of age. After a few years, he was so deeply assailed by certain doubts that he became mentally and physically ill. He then gave up his post as a professor in 1095, and left Baghdad, ostensibly to go to Mecca on pilgrimage, but really to quit the pursuit of philosophy and theology as means of seeking truth and salvation, and to spend the rest of his life as a poor sufi (mystic). After his pilgrimage to Mecca, he retired to Tus in sufistic seclusion and died in 1111 A. D. He wrote a number of books on religion, philosophy, ethics, and sufism, among which the most famous are *Ahya-ul-Ulum* (The Revivification of the Science of Religion): *Tahafat-ul-*

1. The spelling of his name has been a matter of dispute almost from his own time. It is spelt both as al-Ghazzali and al-Ghazali. The former spelling is derived from *Ghazzal*, the spinner and vendor of wool, as his father was. To the medieval Europen scholastics he was known as Algazel.

Falasifah (Destruction of Philosophers); *Al-Manqaz-min-az-Zalal* (Saviour from Error), etc.

End of Philosophical Theology. With al-Ghazāli Muslim speculations in philosophy, ethics and theology came to an end. Sunni theology reached its culmination in the triumph of theology over philosophy, of Revelation over Reason and of Sufism or Mysticism over quest for truth and wisdom. No other Muslim philosopher, theologian and scholar made any advance beyond the teachings of al-Ghazāli. An era of decadence and stagnation ensued. Such an end, however, was never intended by al-Ghazāli, who himself was not only a great philosopher and scholar, but also a great enquirer of Truth. Nevertheless, the popular belief that he was the final word on Islamic speculation discouraged even to the present day every fresh thought or movement. So, as Ameer Ali remarks, "but for al-Ashari and al-Ghazzali, the Arabs might have been a nation of Galileos, Keplers and Newtons."

Basic Doctrines of Asharism. (1) *The Doctrine of Bi-lā Kayf or unquestioning conformism.* In opposition to the Mutazilite insistence on the supremacy of Reason over Revelation, al-Ashari and other Orthodox Ulema asserted the primacy of Revealed Truth as final, which was to be accepted without questioning, *i.e., bilā kayf* or without searching for reason. Man cannot attain the knowledge of God through Reason. So he must follow Revelation unquestioningly. God can command impossibilities. God's justice is not the same as the justice of man. He may punish a man for good action and reward him for his bad acts.

(2) The Doctrine Predestinarianism. The Orthodox Ulema rejected the Mutazila doctrine of Free Will and proclaimed that of predestinarianism. According to them, God does what He pleases and whatever He does is necessary and predestined. No law, including justice, can limit His action. Qaza and Qadar, *i. e.*, destiny and will, are predetermined by God, according to which good and evil, fortune and misfortune come to human beings. So, good and evil are not what reason tells us, but what religion has commanded. But neither faith nor infidelity can change the Qaza and Qadar of a Muslim. God is the Creator of all acts of man, and not the man himself. In short, God has absolute Free Will, while man has absolute Qaza or destiny.

The Doctrine of Creation by God and 'Acquisition' by man. Having rejected the Mutazilite doctrine of free will, the Ash'arites put forth the doctrine of "Creation by God and 'Acquisition (*kasb* or *iktisab*) by man". Creation by God meant that all natural objects and forces are created by God and that man has no power

over them. But the question was: what about the relation of man to his act? The Mutazilites held that man had the power to will an act or its opposite, that is, either obedience to a command or disobedience. Al-Ashari and his followers denied that man had such a freedom. According to them, man must 'acquire' the act, that is, the power to act is a power to do only the act, not the opposite, and it exists only in the moment of acting, neither before nor afterwards, and that it is created by God. Man does little more than "accept as his" what God does through him. Obviously, the Ash'arite conception of Qadar left so little power to man that it became a compulsion or *jabr*. Nevertheless, Al-Ash'ari believed that it gave man sufficient responsibility for his acts to be justly rewarded or punished at the last Judgment.

Uncreatedness of the Quran. In sharp contrast to the Mutazila, the Asharites proclaimed the Quran to be eternal and uncreated. It it the eternal Word of God, and, therefore, every anthrapomorphic expression in the Quran is to be accepted without explanation and its teachings cannot be interpreted differently by Reason due to changing circumstances. The laws of religion are to remain unchanging, no matter what social changes occur. Hence there was to be no new thought, no free-thinking and no new research or inquiry into Reason and Truth, for Truth is what Quran says, and the Quran is eternal and unchanging.

Historical Consequences of Ilm al-Kalam. The victory of the theologians of the Ilm al-Kalam over their adversaries, Mutazilite and others, had far-reaching effects on the society, culture and mind of the medieval Muslims.

The Triumph of Sunnism. The immediate effect of the Ilm al-Kalam was the triumph of Sunnism as the predominant form of Islamic faith, the majority religion of the Muslims. This result came about after nearly five centuries of struggle between the particularistic trends of Shiaism and the general religious trends among the non-Shia Muslims during the eleventh century A. D/fifth century A. H. But other factors, besides the theologians of the Ilm al-Kalam, also contributed to the Sunnite victory. One of them was the support and protection of the Seljuq Sultans and their wazirs, like Nizam ul Mulk, and after them, the same kind of support and protection by almost all other rulers who conquered and ruled the central and peripheral lands of the Medieval Islam during the subsequent centuries, who were converted to Sunnism before or after their conquest of a Muslim land. Another factor was the influence of the *madrasas* or colleges, which were set up by the Seljuq rulers and others to teach Sunni theology and other Quranic sciences and to counter the Fatimid and Ismailian propaganda, then so powerfully spread by the Fatimid

rulers of Egypt and by the Ismailian Assassins from various centres in Persia, etc. For example, the Seljuqi wazir, Nizam ul Mulk, established his madrasah, *Nizamiyya*, at Baghdad and another at Nishapur, to teach Sunni theology, fiqh, etc. These madrasahs sent out growing numbers of students and scholars who, by their teaching and preaching, spread far and wide the Sunni faith, as embodied in the Ilm al-Kalam and other Quranic sciences. Indeed, the founding of these madrasahs manifested the zeitgeist of Medieval Islam. It was a change in the culture and spirit of the Medieval Muslims who were now so conservative and conformistic as to be reluctant and to dislike free enquiry and research, which characterised the Early Muslims, who founded *bayts al-hikma* and *bayts al-kutub* for the study and propagation of secular sciences and philosophy.

Behind these changes in the Medieval Islamic *zeitgeist* were, however, the forces of familial degeneration and kinship disintegration which, on the one hand, spread feelings of insecurity and despondency among the Muslims, and on the other, brought about the nomadic-feudal Sisyphean cycles. These recurrent cycles of conquest, decadence and anarchy aggravated the resultant feelings of insecurity, despair and helplessness among the Muslims which inclined them towards traditionalism and conformism as the safe and proven attitudes and norms of social relations and behaviour, as well as of religious belief and dogma.

Domination of the anti-rationalist Ulema. After Al-Ash'ri and Al-Ghazali, the theologians of the Ilm al-Kalam became more and more hostile to free enquiry and research as well as to reason and philosophy. The Mutazilites had subordinated revelation to reason, but the Ash'arites, the Hanbalites, the Mutaridites and other Mutakallimeen or Ulema of the Ilm al-Kalam subordinate reason to revelation. They laid emphasis on accepting the dogma of Islam without stating a rational explanation or *bi-la kayf*, as they put it. In other words, the Ilm al-Kalam or philosophical theology became with them not a rational explanation of the dogmas and teachings of Islam but an apologetic defence or justification of them. Such an attitude inevitably led to intellectual decline, in theological speculation.

Sclerosis of Sunni Theology. The anti-rational, apologetic and conformist attitudes of the theologians of the Ilm al-Kalam led, inevitably, to a decline and decadence of their intellect and mind. Although the number of the students and scholars of Sunni theology increased, the quality of their writings constantly declined. One of the signs of this qualitative decline was the lack of originality among the theological writers of all the subsequent ages. From the time of al-Ghazali (died 1111) down to the present times, only

four great names in Islamic theology can be mentioned, and even they came far between. They are : ash-Shahrastani (died 1153), Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi (died) 1209), ibn-Taymiyyah (died) 1328), and in recent times Muhammad Abduh, died 1905. Instead of original works, the vast multitudes of the Ulema, whose names were legions, spent their time and energy in writing commentaries and glosses on the works of the earlier masters. Indeed, rigid conservatism became the hall-mark of their mode of thinking and teaching.

Popularity of Sufism and Sufi Orders. Sufism, as a system of mystical belief and practice, was both the cause and result of the triumph of Sunnism. Sufism may be defined as the "attempt of individual Muslims to realize in their personal experience *the living* presence of Allah".

The term 'sufi' was derived from '*suf*' (wool), of which the simple garments were made which the sufis wore as a sign of their renunciation of the world and all its pleasures, luxuries and comforts. So sufism was a phenomenon concomitant with the social decadence which overtook Islamic society at the end of the Umayyad period and became aggravated when the Abbaside Caliphate began to decay and disintegrate. In fact, the greater the social decadence and anarchy, the greater the immersion in sufistic subjectivism and asceticism.

Though its origins could be traced to the earliest period of Islam, Sufism as such really began with Hasan al-Basri (died 728 A. D.), who was famous for his asceticism, simplicity and disapproval of the luxurious ways of life and dress of the Umayyad ruling classes. Indeed, asceticism, quietism, simplicity and other-worldliness were the chief features of Sufism during the eighth century.

During the next century, sufism became more organised as a system of doctrine and practice. First of all, the sufi's goal in life was to pass away in God, called *fana* or union with God. This goal could be attained by self-denial (*zuhd*) and mystical knowledge of God, called *ma'rifa*, as distinguished from formal knowledge, called *ilm*. In the progress towards *fana* loss of self and *baqa* or union with God, a sufi passed through a number of stages of *zuhd* and *ma'rifa*. In the language of sufism, these stages were known as "stations" or *maqamat* and "states" or *ahwal*. A "station" or *maqam* indicated the degree of progress attained by the personal effort of the sufi, while a 'state' or *hal* was the advance contingent upon God's grace.

In course of time, Sufism developed certain features which were not acceptable to the orthodox Ulema In the progress

towards *fana* and *ma'arifa*, some sufis went to such extremes as appeared heretical and un-Islamic to the Ulema. It was a union with God in which the sufi claimed to become himself the God. For instance, al-Hallaj's cry of "*Ana'l Haqq*", I am God, for which reason he was condemned to death in 922 as an incarnationist and a blasphemer. His crucifixion, however, became a warning for all sufis henceforward to remain on the safe side of orthodoxy in their progress towards *fana* and *halul* or union with God. There were certain divergences in the Sufi practice which were condemned by the Shari'a. Indeed, Sufism began where Shari'a duties or ahkam ended. But several Muslim scholars, especially al-Ghazali, succeeded in reconciling the two systems of belief and practice. Al-Ghazali declared that a true sufi began his life with the faithful observance of the Shari'a duties as the foundation of his ascent to the higher mystical "states". He said that fana or union with the divine omnipotence was inherent in man by nature because he was the image of God. The reconciliation of Sufism with Islamic theology and Shari'a by al-Ghazali "smoothed the path for all the pathological excesses that were later to bring Sufism into disrepute".[1]

The reconciliation between Sufism and Shari'a was attained during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The next development, which took place during the twelfth century, was the beginning of the Sufi orders or *tariqas*. With this development Sufism became a mass movement. It centred around a sufi *shaykh* or *pir*, regarded as an infallible authority on mystical and other religious experiences and practices by his followers, called *murids* or *shagirds*, the neophytes. The bestowal of letters-patent to them as a testimony of their spiritual chain or *silsila* with the "founding father" or the *shaykh* or *pir*. Each mystic order or *tariqa* had a centre or *khanqah* or *dargah* where the shaykh initiated and instructed his *murids* in the doctrines and with the practices of his order. The first of these sufi orders was Qadariyya, founded by Abdul Qadir al-Jilani (1078-1166), followed by Rifaiyya, Suhrawardiyya and others, during the later centuries. In fact, the more the Medieval Islam was involved in the Sisyphean cycles and the anarchy, instability and insecurity of life, and society produced by them, the more the Sufi orders proliferated and became popular with the elite and common classes of the Muslim peoples, as a refuge from the perils and challenges of the hostile world in and around them. "The pious and the wise went into mystic seclusion and their descendants degenerated into dancing dervishes and keepers and worshippers of shrines."[2]

1. R. C. Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, p. 171. (London, 1960).

2. M. M. Sharif, *Muslim Thought : Its Origin and Achievement*, p. 117. Lahore, 1951.

SHARI'AH OR ISLAMIC LAW

Four Sources of Islamic Law, or Shariah. Like the Romans of old, the early Muslims devoutedly collected and developed an eleborate system of law, called Shari'ah and jurisprudence called Fiqh. It was derived from two primary sources, namely, Quran and Hadith or Sunna, and two subsidiary sources, *Ijma* or consensus, and *Ijtihad* or *Qiyas* or opinion. These are the four sources of Shari'a or Law which regulated Muslim life from the worship of God to the obedience of the ruler, and matters of daily life and social relations of the Believers, such as marriage, inheritance, etc.

Collection of the Tradition of the Prophet. The Hadiths or the Sayings af the Holy Prophet and the Sunnah or his Acts are the Traditions of the Holy Prophet. They are of primary importance, for they indicate the ideal way of life for a Muslim to live. Their importance increased as time passed after the death of the Holy Prophet (Sm). At first these Traditions were passed on by oral transmission. The reason was that the Companions of the Holy Prophet and their children, called the Tabiyeen and immediate descendants, called the Tabi-tabiyeen, had either lived in Prophet's life-time or had directly heard from those who had seen the Prophet's days. But, after three or four generations, two things made the early Muslims to feel the need to collect and comment upon the Ahadith. Oral transmission had to be recorded and as there were all sorts of Traditions, it was felt necessary to sift the true from the spurious or false ones. Thus the colleetion and comment upon the Tradition led to the growth of the science of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence, or Fiqh.

Four Schools of Islamic Jurisprudence or Fiqh. The need to apply the injunctions and teachings of the Quran to the questions of daily life and relations of the Muslims and the need to collect and comment upon the Ahadith led to the rise of four great schools of Muslim Jurisprudence, founded by four great commentators, usually called the Imams. They are (1) the school of **Imam Abu Hanifah**, who lived in Kufa. He was a grandson of a Persian captive and freedman and died in 767 A. D., at Baghdad. He is noted for his juristic principle of *Istihsan* or equity and suitableness of an act. He had several disciples, among whom was Abu Yusuf, the Chief Qazi of Harun, who died in 798 A. D. The Hanafi School became the earliest and the most widespread School of Islamic Law, and has to-day the largest number of followers in the Muslim world, *i.e.*, nearly 22 crore people. In this sense, it is, as Von Kremer says, "the highest and loftiest achievement of which Islam was capable" (2) **Imam Malik bin Anas** (715-95), a resident of Medina and a contemporary of Abu Hanifah, founded the

second school, known as the Maliki School. He was himself a great Traditionalist or collector of Ahadith, which he compiled in a book entitled "al-Muwatta" (the levelled path), one of the earliest compilations of the Traditions. He laid the juristic principle of *Maslahat* or public good. His followers to-day number about 8 crores. (3) **Imam Shafi'i** founded the third School. He was born at Ghaza in Palestine in 767 of a Qurayshite family and lived both at Baghdad and Cairo, where he died in 820. He was a pupil of Imam Malik, but developed his own system, which combined the features of the Hanafi and Maliki schools. His followers to-day number about 10 crores. (4) **Imam Ahmad Hanbal** founded the fourth school, which is the most conservative and uncompromising of all. He lived in the days of Mamun, Motasim and Wathiq, and suffered much from the Mutazilite proclivities of these Caliphs and the Inquisition or Mihna, which they instituted against the Orthodox Ulema. But he stubbornly resisted their attempts. He had a great influence upon the people of Baghdad, as was indicated by the huge procession of about 9 lakh men and women who followed his funeral when he died in 855. The Hanbalites spearheaded the opposition against all the free-thinkers, the Mutazilities, and the Shia and others who did not accept the Orthodox schools and docrines. Their number, however, is very small today ; *i.e.*, only 60 lakh followers. With Hanbal ended further progress in Law and jurisprudence in Islam.

The Shia and the Tradition. The above-mentioned schools are the Sunni Schools. The Shia have their own Traditionalists and jurists, called the *Mujtahids*. They reject the Ijma or the Consensus of opinion as the valid source of Islamic Law or Shariat, for they accept the absolute authority and judgment of their Imams, the descendants of Ali and Fatimah or their living reprentatives, the Mujtahids.

EDUCATION

The Abbaside Caliphate was the golden age of Muslim education and learning. The earlier mosque maktabs or mosque schools grew into regular educational institutions of both elementary and higher learning. A network of them spread over the whole Empire. Besides them, other centres of learning were also established. In fact, an organised system of education and lectures was evolved, which commenced with primary education and ended with higher learning in both religious and secular disciplines.

Elementary Schools or Maktabs. Education began at the age of four in the family circle, when the little child was taught *Kalimah*. When the child reached the age of six, formal education began in a local primary school, always housed in a mosque,

called '*maktab*'. In these elementary schools both boys and girls were taught together. Some of these schools were housed in private places, like palaces, shops, etc. At this stage, education began with the reading and memorising of the Quran and writing Arabic or penmanship. Then the elementary knowledge of grammar, Hadith and simple arithmatic and some devotional poems was imparted. With this ended the elementary education, especially for the girls who were not expected to acquire higher learning, which was meant mostly for boys. A few girls, however, learnt higher branches of knowledge as well. The elementary education was free and general, for even the poor sent their children to these mosque-schools ; even slaves, as Ibn Khallikan says, learnt it. The children of the rich usually received it at home under private tutors, who taught *adab* or manners and morals also. The lot of the elementary school teachers was, however, hard. They were poorly paid and held in little or no respect, as is indicated by a common proverb—"more foolish than a teacher of an elementary school."

Madrasahs or Institutions of Higher Education and Learning. One of the most remarkable features of the Abbaside Caliphate was the increasing number of institutions for higher learning, called madrasahs for religious and Bayt at-Hikmah for secular purposes. They were established or endowed by the Caliphs, the Viziers, the Sultans, the princes, the rich men and learned persons. In the later part of the Abbaside period, that is, form the tenth century A. D. onward, they existed almost in every important city or town of the Muslim world, from Central Asia to Spain. The first prominent institution for higher learning was established by Mamun in Baghdad in 830, called the **Bayt ul Hikmah** or the House of Wisdom or Learning. It was an academy, a public library, an observatory and a translation bureau. The Caliph ordered its principal to visit the "country of the Greeks" in order to bring books of Greek philosophy and learning to be translated into Arabic. It was, indeed, the first university in human history and was flocked by many men of learning, among whom the most famous were al-Khwarizmi, the mathematician, Tabari, Yaqubi, and Masudi, the historians, and theologians. Following the Abbaside example, the Fatimid Anti-Caliph, al-Hakim, founded, another academy, called *Dar-ul Hikmah*, in his capital, Cairo, in 1005. It was not really an institution for liberal learning but for Ismailian indoctrination. From the tenth century religious madrasahs were also founded. One of them, which became a model for all later institutions of higher learning in the Islamic world, was the **Nizamiyyah Madrasah** or College, founded by Nizam-ul-Mulk, the famous vizier of the Seljuq Sultan, Alp-Arslan, in 1065-67 in Baghdad. It was magnificiently endowed and splendidly staffed by famous scholars and professors among whom was

al-Ghazali, who taught in it during 1091-95. Other famous teachers and scholars of the Nizamiyyah Madrasah were Baha-al-Din, the biographer of Salah-ud-Din Ayyubi and Imam-ul-Harmayn. The great Nizam-ul-Mulk, however, established and endowed several other Colleges in various other towns in the Seljuq Empire, such as at Nishapur, Merv, Herat, Samarkand, Isfahan, Balkh. Following his example, several other rulers and patrons of learning set up many other higher schools and colleges. Indeed, "founding a madrasah was always considered a meritorious act in Islam". A few of them were **al-Mustansiriyah,** founded by the Caliph al-Mustansir in Baghdad in 1234, to teach the four schools of Sunni jurisprudence and theology ; the **Tajiya,** founded by Taj-ud-Daula, a vizier of the Seljuqs, **Tarkhaniya** and **Khatuniya**, founded by Seljuq princesses in Syria, **Rambiyya, Nasariyya** and **Salahiyya**, founded by the Ayyubid rulers in Egypt. Such colleges also existed in Ghazni and even Lahore.

Their Method of Teaching and Study. In these Colleges, Muslim theological sciences, such as the study of the Quran, Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqah, etc., where particularly taught and studied. But secular or worldly sciences, such as logic, philosophy, astronomy, history, poetry and literature or humanities, were also taught. Every branch of knowledge had its own teacher or professor, who lectured to a large gathering of students, who sometimes numbered more than 500. They sat on stools around the lecturer who stood on a platform. Lectures were free and open to all. They usually began from noon and lasted till the evening prayer. After every lecture, the students put numerous questions, both oral and written, to the teacher on every aspect of his lecture. He answered them all to the complete satisfaction of the enquirers. During the lectures, the students frequently took down notes of their own, for which purpose pens, ink, and even papers were freely supplied to them. After the professor had finished his lecture and departed, his lecture was further explained and repeated by his assistants, called the "*mu'ids.*" When the students had mastered their subject and satisfied their teacher of it, he issued a certificate or diploma called "*ijazah*". On the basis of this diploma, the student himself became a teacher, if he so liked. In teaching, the stress was on memory-work, which developed their memories to prodigious extent. The relations between the teachers and their students were at once intimate and friendly. Some colleges had hostels attached to them. If none, the students often resided in the neighbourhood and some times even with the teacher. Most of the teachers lived on the fees, presents, etc., given by their students. But some of them were given salaries from the royal treasury or endowments or paid by their rich patrons.

General level of learning. General level of education and

learning was very high and extensive. A great class of highly learned scholars and intellectuals existed all over the Muslim world. After acquiring knowledge in a local school or college, a young student usually went on his study tour, visiting reputed colleges and celebrated teachers in other towns and provinces in order to learn directly from them. Thus every caravan of merchants and traders included a number of students and scholars travelling to and fro in search of knowledge and learning. Moreover, the courts and palaces of the caliphs, the residences of the grandees, nobles and rich merchants, the courtyards of the mosques, the houses of the learned, the shops of the book-sellers, and the like, were places of intellectual re-unions, called *Majlis*, and study circles, called *Halqahs*. In these assemblies and circles, religious questions and problems were discussed, linguistic, literary and poetic compositions were recited and criticised, and philosophical and scientific views and theories debated and criticised. These centres of learning and discussion indicate a great ferment of intellect and a high level of culture among the peoples of the Abbaside Caliphate.

Chief features of the Educational System. The educational and academic system reveals some features, which show its strong and weak points. It was not systematically organised in respect of both the branches of knowledge taught and the method of teaching. Religious subjects were more emphasised than the secular or non-religious ones, especially in the regular institutions, the madrasahs or colleges. Memory-work was overemphasised, which, in the long run, proved an obstacle to the free growth of imagination, thought and intellect. It stunted the mind of the students and scholars, wasted their time and diverted their attention from further enquiry and study. Thus it arrested further growth of science and knowledge. But it possessed several merits as well. Knowledge was taught in both its aspects, applied and pure. Practical knowledge was imparted along with the theoretic. For instance, the physicians taught medicine to their pupils in their hospitals or "bimaristans" as they were called, and astronomy was taught in the observatories.

Libraries. Libraries of various kinds existed almost everywhere. There were libraries in the palaces of the caliphs and sultans, viziers and nobles, in the mansions of the rich, in the houses of the learned and libraries attached to the mosques. The mosque-libraries became rich in books, especially on religion, due to frequent gifts and presents by the people. The palace-libraries were carefully stocked with books by the rulers who were often great patrons of learning. They were properly catalogued and looked after by a special staff of men of learning. For instance, the Library of the Buwayhid ruler, Azud-ud-Daula in Shiraz, called the *Khizanat-ul-Kutab* was housed in 360 rooms and pavilions. The private libraries of the dignitaries and rich men were often open to the public.

Scholars and men of learning had free access to them. Sometimes these libraries were endowed as "waqf" for public use, in which case they became public libraries in the real sense. Such a library existed in Mosul, where the students were even provided with free paper. A library founded by a Buwayhid vizier, Shahpur Ardashir, in Baghdad, contained one lakh volumes. The library at Rai contained four hundred camel-loads of books. The Fatimid library, attached to the Dar-ul-Hikmah, contained two million (twenty lakh) books, perhaps a somewhat exaggerated figure. They were housed in forty chambers. A library at Tripoli in Syria contained three million books, of which fifty to sixty thousand were commentaries on the Quran. The library at Cordova in Spain contained four lakh books. Unfortunately, most of these magnificent libraries were plundered or burnt to ashes by various invaders and conquerors of the Caliphate, its internal and external foes, such as the rival sultans, the Turkish tribes and above all, the Mongol hordes of Changiz and Halaku.

Bookshops. Bookshops were not only commercial places, but also intellectual centres. The book-seller was often a scholar himself and a connoisseur of books. Scholars assembled in his shop not only to buy books but also to discuss them. In Baghdad, according to Yaqubi, one hundred bookshops existed in about 891. The books were published in manuscripts, written on parchment, papyri or paper. By the end of the tenth century A. D., paper was so abundantly manufactured that it replaced the older writing materials, parchment and Egyptian papyrus.

CHAPTER 31

SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY AND LEARNING UNDER THE ABBASIDE CALIPHS

The Age of Translations and Creative Works. The Arab achievements in science, philosophy and learning were inspired by two influences ; firstly by the purely Islamic influence. The Holy Prophet (Sm) and Islam laid special emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge and learning. And secondly, by the influence and inspiration from foreign peoples, especially the Greeks, and Iranians of old, and to a lesser extent by the Indian and other neighbouring cultures. The foreign influence began when the books in ancient Greek, Persian and Sanskrit were translated. The work of translation had commenced during the Umayyad period, but on a private initiative. Under the Abbasides, this work commenced under the direct patronage and initiative of the Abbaside Caliphs, especially Mansur, Harun and Mamun. The Bayt-ul-Hikmat was primarily a translation bureau. It worked under learned translators, mostly Christians and Jews, who were acquainted with Greek language and learning, or with Syriac or Aramaic, Hebrew and other ancient languages.

Method of Translation. The era of translation lasted for about a century, from 750 to 850 A.D. In order to make Arabic capable of expressing new sciences and philosophy, it was immensely developed in two ways. Firstly, internal flexibility of Arabic was made use of by deriving new words and terms from its own vocabulary. It was a development from within. Secondly, where no new words could be moulded from the existing stock, the foreign words, especially Greek terms, were loaned as such by simple transliteration. Thus many foreign words were Arabicised, *e. g.*, Jumatriya (geometry) falsafah (philosophy) maqnatis (magnet) musiqi (music) jughrafiya (geography) urghun (organ) iksir (elixir), etc.

The age of translations was followed by the age of creative thought and work, in various branches of sciences and philosophy, as described hereunder.

Medicine. The first science to develop fully under caliphal patronage was medicine. It was partly due to the existence of old Persian tradition, preserved in the great medical school and hospital at Jundeshahpur. When the work of translation began, many Greek and other foreign books on medicine were translated by renowned physicians and translators. A Christian Arab,

Hunayn bin Ishaq, translated seven books of Hippocrates, the works of Gelen and of Paul of Aegina and the *materia medica* of Dioscorides. Moreover, Hubaysh, Isa bin Yahya and Qusta bin Luqa also translated medical books. Thabit bin Qurra (825-901) worked independently at Harran and published books on the diseases of the head, the breast, etc. During the second period of independent work and creative labour, great advances was made in science of medicine, by such famous men as **Abu Bakr Muhammad al-Razi** (known as Rhazes in Europe) (865-925) who wrote about 200 books on various subjects. His masterpiece in medicine was the book entitled *al-Hawi*, in 20 volumes. **Ali bin Abbas**, an Iranian, wrote an encyclopedia in medicine,entitled *Kitab-e-Maleki*. The greatest name in Muslim medicine was, of course, **Abu Ali Husayn Ibn Sina** (Europe in Avicenna), (980-1037). He was the greatest Islamic philosopher and the most popular physician, called by the Arabs "*al shaykh al-ra'is*" (the shaikh and prince among the learned). He was born at Bukhara and lived mostly in the East, at the court of the Samanid King, Nuh bin Mansur. He was in charge of his royal library. Among his scintific works, two books are of utmost importance in medicine, namely, *Kitab al-Shifa* (the book of healing) but which is mostly on philosophy and the great "*Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb*" (Canon of Medicine) which deals with general medicine, drugs, diseases, pathology, pharmacopeia, etc. It was, indeed, the final summation of the Greek-Arabic science of medicine. It was translated into Latin in Europe and remained a standard text-book upto the 17th century.

Hospitals. The early Abbaside Caliphs established hospitals, called "*bimaristan*" or briefly "maristan", after the example of the former Persian sovereigns. The first hospital was set up by Harun ar-Rashid in Baghdad. In course of time, thirty-four hospitals were established in various parts of the Muslim world, such as at Cairo in 872 by Ibn Tulun and by Nur-ud-Din Mahmud in Damascus. Every hospital was under the supervision of a director, called *Dabir*, who was a prominent physician. Owing to the malpractices of the quacks, Caliph al-Muqtadir ordered the examination of all practising physicians and pharmacists. It was conducted by the chief physician, Sinan bin Thabit bin Qurrah, who issued certificates or *Ijazah* to successful candidates, who alone could practise afterwards. The physicians visited the patients in their houses and the sick prisoners in prisons. Other branches of medicine, as surgery, pharmacy, materia medica, ophthalmology, were also greatly developed.

Alchemy or Medieval Chemistry. The Arabs were the orginators of the modern science of Chemistry, which they called *al-Kimiya*, from which the words alchemy and chemistry are derived. It began with Khalid bin Yazid bin Muawiya, who was the first

alchemist of the Arabs. But this science flourished really under the Abbasides. It was inspired by their desire to discover the Elexir or secret of life and the "philosopher's stone" to transmute baser metals into gold and silver. The first great Arab alchemist was **Jabir bin Hayyan** (Europe in "Geber"). He flourished at Kufa about 776, where he set up a laboratory. He discovered several chemical compounds. He wrote serveral books, three of which have survived to the present day, *viz.*, *Kitab al-Rahmah*, *Kitab al-Tajmi* (book of concentration) and *al-Zibaq al-Sharqi* (on eastern mercury). "He improved on the methods for evaporation, sublimation, melting and crystalization". Other Muslim alchemists were **al-Razi**, who discovered sulphuric acid and aqua-vitae, and **Ibn Sina** who systematised medical chemistry.

Astronomy and Methematics. Muslims made great progress in the twin sciences of astronomy and mathematics. They made many discoveries in them, as is shown by Arabic names found in these sciences to the present day. They were, however, influenced equally by the ancient Greeks and by the Indians. The Indian work on astronomy, called *Siddhanta*, was translated in 771 by Muhammad bin Ibrahim al-Fazari and used as a model by later scholars. Ptolemy's book *Almagest* was translated in 828 by Hajjaj bin Matar, and by Hunayn bin Ishaq and revised by Thabit bin Qurra. The old Persian astronomical tables, called *Zik*, were translated into Arabic and were called "*zij*".

Observatories. Arab science was essential practical. The astronomical studies were based on practical observations of the movements of heavenly bodies. For this porpose, observatories were set up by the Caliphs and Sultans throughout the Abbaside period. The first observatory, called *rasd*, was established by al-Mamun in Baghdad at Shammasiya gate, as part of his Bayt-ul-Hikmah. It was under the direction of **Sind bin Ali**, and **Yahya bin abi-Mansur**. Mamun's astronomers made systematic observations of the celestial movements, verified the Greek astronomical theories, as contained in the Almagest, such as the obliquity of the ecliptic, the procession of the equinoxes, the length of the solar year. The astronomical instruments were the astrolabe (Arabicised as *asturlab*), quadrant, dial and globes. They also measured the length of the terrestrial degree, in order to determine the size of the earth. They found it to be 20,400 miles, which is very near to modern calculations. Other observatories were erected by the celebrated sons of Musa bin Shakir (850-70) at Baghdad, and at Shiraz, Rai, Nishapur and Samarkand. The Buwayhid and Seljuq rulers were also deeply interested in astronomy and astrology. Other great astronomers were **Abu'l Abbas Ahmad al-Farghani**, who flourished in the reign of Mutawakkil, **Muhammad bin Jabir al-Battani** who made his observations and studies at Raqqa between

877 and 918, the great Abu Raihan Muhammad ibn Ahmad **al-Beruni** (973-1048) an astronomer, mathematician, historian and philosopher, who flourished at the court of Mahmud of Ghaznah and his son Masud and the equally famous **Umar al-Khayyam**, (1038-1124), a poet, philosopher, mathematician and astronomer. Under orders of the Seljuq Sultan Malik Shah, he reformed the calendar, which was named after his patron as at-Tarikh al-Jalali.

Mathematics. In mathematics also the Arabs made original contributions. Some of their discoveries and inventions are the science of Algebra, invention of decimal arithmetic, discovery of plane and spherical geometry, the invention of algorisms, by **al-Khwarizimi** (780-850), which were named after him, the Arabic numerals and the use of zero, borrowed from the ancient Hindus. Among the great Muslim mathematicians were **Muhammad bin Musa al-Khwarizmi** (780-850) who wrote the book "*Hisab al-Jabr wa'l Muqabalah*" which laid the foundation of the science of Algebra; **Shuja ibn-Aslam Abu Kamil** of Egypt, who perfected al-Khwarizmi's algebra ; **Ibrahim bin Sinan**, (908-46), a grandson of Thabit bin Qurra ; **Abul Wafa** who lived in the 10th century and "studied the tangent and introduced the secant and cosecant", **Umar al-Khayyam and al-Beruni**, mentioned above.

Geography and Cartography. Great progress was made in geography by the Muslims during this period, both as a subject and as a practical science. Its study was promoted by various religious considerations. As Hitti says, "the institution of the holy pilgrimage, the orientation of the mosque towards Mecca and the need for determining the direction at the time of prayer gave religious impetus to the Muslim study of geography." But there were secular reasons also for this study. As the "children of the desert", the Arabs had to study the movements of the heavenly bodies, the stars, the sun and the moon, and the changes of the seasons, in order to find their way through the "pathless wastes" of the sand. Moreover, when they built the vast empires of the Umayyads and the Abbasides, the Muslims had to describe the roads and routes, position of the towns and provinces, etc., for administrative and political purposes. Lastly, the Muslims of the Abbaside period were, so to say, born globe-trotters, who wandered all over the Muslim world and even beyond, as travellers and navigators, and for various purposes of trade, study or pilgrimage or sheer curiosity. Many of these globe-trotters were learned men who had left detailed description of their journeys through Muslim and non Muslim lands. Their writings are mines of geographical and historical information. Among these traveller geographers, the most famous were : **Ibn Wazih Al-Yaqubi** also known as the "father of Muslim geography", who wrote "*Kitab al-Buldan* (book of countries) in about 891-92 ; **Ibn Rustah**, who wrote his "*al-Alaq*

al-Nafisah" (precious bags of travelling provisions) ; **Ibn al-Faqih al-Hamadani**, who wrote another "*Kitab al-Buldan*" in 903 ; **Ibn Hawqal**, who flourished during 943-77, and was a great traveller. He travelled throughout the Muslim world for 30 years and wrote a book with maps, entitled "*al-Masalik wa'l Mamalik*" (the Routes and Lands). **Al-Maqdisi** or **al-Muqaddasi**, so called because he was born in Jerusalem (Bayt al-Maqdis) travelled for twenty years in all lands, except Spain and India. He wrote his book, illustrated with maps, "*Ahsan al-Taqasim fi Ma'rifat al-Aqalim*" (The best guide to the knowledge of the regions) in 985-86. **Al-Beruni** who lived for several years in India of Mahmud of Ghazni's days, described the country in his famous book, *Kitab al-Hind* ; and the last, **Yaqut ibn Abdullah al-Hamawi** (1179-1229) who wrote the geographical dictionary *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, which is a veritable encyclopaedia of history, ethnography and natural sciences, while his other book "*Mu'jam al-Udaba*" is a dictionary of biographies of learned men.

Besides the travelling geographers, there were also many scientific geographers. They translated the earlier Greek book on geography, such as Ptolemy's Geography, translated by Yaqub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi in about 874 and by Thabit ibn Qurra in 901. The first great Muslim geographer was the famous mathmatician, **Muhammad bin Musa al-Khwarizmi**, who wrote the book entitled "*Surat al Arz*" (the Shape of the Earth). He also gave in it a map of the earth which he prepared with the aid of sixty-nine other scholars at the suggestion of Mamun. It was the first map of the world and of the heavens in the history of Islam. **Ibn Khurdadhbih**, who died in 912, was the Sahib ul Barid wa'l Akhbar (the Director of the department of Post and Intelligence) in western Persia and wrote his book entitled "*al-Masalik wa'l Mamalik*" (the routes and lands) in about 846, which became a model for several travelogues of the later geographers, like Ibn Hawqal, al-Maqdisi, etc.

Geographical discoveries and inventions. The Abbaside Muslims invented the mariners' compass and voyaged from China and Phillipines in the east to Azores and Canary Islands in the west, both for purposes of commerce and knowledge. Their navigators are said to have discovered America, long before Columbus. As regards scientific geography, the Muslim geographers determined the prime meridian or the centre of the world, which they called "*arin*" --a word which they borrowed from the name of the Indian city of Ujjain' in western India. It lay on the equator, opposite to which was the "*qubbat al Arz*" or the "world copula" or "summit" in the heavens.

Philosophy. Philosophy was the very breath of the Abbaside peoples, from the caliphs down to a man in the street. By

philosophy they understood (1) knowledge of things, (2) the knowledge of men, and (3) the science of reasoning or dialectic, called "*kalam*" in Arabic. Their main purpose in philosophical speculation and study was to reconcile or harmonise the ideology of Islam, as embodied in the Quran, and the philosophy of the ancient Greeks, especially of Aristotle, who was their philosopher *par excellence*. But, to a lesser extent, they were also influenced by the ancient Persian (Zoroastrian) and Indian philosophies.

As usual, the sudy of philosophy began with an age of translations of the writings of the Greek and other foreign thinkers, under the inspiration of the early Abbaside Caliphs. Thus the first group of translators, Hunayn bin Ishaq and his son and disciples, the three sons of Musa bin Shakir and others translated the books of Euclid, Galen, Hippocrates, Archimedes, the Republic, and the Tımaeus of Palto, the Categories, Physics, Magna Moralia of Aristotle and the Commentary on Aritotle's Metaphysics by Paul of Aegina, etc. Later, a second group of translators, Abu Bishr Matta bin Yunus, (died in 939), Thabit bin Qurra, Yahya bin Adi (died in 974)' Abu Ali ibn-Zurah (died in 1008) translated or re-translated the Categories, the Sophist, the Elenchi, Poetics and Metaphysics of Arıstotle, the Laws and the Timaeus of Plato, At the end of the tenth century began the creative thought and speculation among the Muslims. Among the greatest names were those of **al-Kindi, al-Farabi** and **Ibn Sina.**

Al Kindi . Abu Yusuf Yaqub bin Ishaq al-Kindi, the first great Muslim philosopher, was born at Kufa about the beginning of the nineth century and died in 873 A. D. He was of pure Arab descend, being of the famous tribe of Kinda, hence known as al-Kindi. But he flonrished at Baghdad. Besides philosophy, he was greatly interested in astrology, medicine, mathematics, geography, music, etc. He wrote about 263 works on various subjects, which have not, however, survived to the present days, except a few in their Latin translations in Europe. In Neo-Platonic fashion, he endeavoured to combine the ideas of Plato and Aristotle. He follows the neo-Platonic theory of cause and effect.

Al-Farabi Abu Nasar Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Farabi was a Turk, born in about 870 in Farab in Sughd (Transoxiana) and died in 950 at Damascus at the age of 80. Hungry for knowledge, he left Farab at an early age and went to Baghdad, where he studied logic under a renowned philosopher Abul Bishr Matta bin Yunus and then went to Harran, another centre of learning. Being a very careful student, he read Aristotle's *De Anima* 200 times and his *Physics* 40 times. He then travelled to Syria and

finally settled at Damascus, where he was in such straitened circumstances that he worked as a watchman and read by the light of the garden lantern. Later Saif-ud-Daula, the Prince of Damascus, granted him a paltry pension of four dirhams (about one rupee) a day, with which he passed rest of his secluded life in profound studies with great contentment. He wrote about one hundred books, which included commentaries on Aristotle and other Greek philosophers, works on psychology, politics and metaphysics. His methods was to combine the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle with Sufism. Some of his writings were *Risalah fi Ara Ahl al-Madina al-Fazilah*" (A book of the opinion of the people of the superior city), *al-Siyasah al-Madaniyah* (a treatise on political economy), *Risalah Fusus al-Hikma* (Gems of Wisdom), etc. Like other philosophers, Farabi was also interested in several other subjects, including a book on music "*Kitab al-Musiqi al-Kabir*" His writings, however, reveal him to be more of a Muslim and a Sufi than a philosopher.

Ibn Sina. Abu Ali al-Husayn, son of Abdullah, an Ismaili, better known as Ibn Sina (Europeanised as Avicenna) was a Persian, born near Bukhara in 980 and lived only in the East, mostly in the court of the Samanid kings of Bukhara. He was a philosopher, physician, philologist, and poet. With him Arab science was perfected, and, one might add, ended. Endowed with great powers of memory and thought, he accumulated great knowledge at an early age and began to write on medicine and philosophy at the age of twenty-one. After living a life of constant dangers, he died in 1073, at the age of about 57 years. But he lived in the age of such great names in Muslims science and learning as al-Beruni, Firdausi, Ibn Maskawayh, who were his contemporaries. Among his forty-five (and according to some, ninety-nine) books, *Kitab al-Shifa* in 18 volumes, *Uyun-ul-Hikmat* in 10 volumes are on philosophy and *Mojez Kabir* and *Mojez Saghir* are on logic. He systematised the philosophies of his predecessors, both Muslim and Greek. "He was", as Prof. O'Leary writes, "the forerunner of compendium writers for the whole world." With the death of Ibn Sina ended the great age of Arab philosophy and also of Muslim science and learning.

Ikhwan as-Safa. No account of Muslim science and philosophy would be complete without a reference to the wonderful galaxy of scholars, the Ikhwan as-Safa, the Brethren of Purity, as they styled themselves. It was a society of scientists, philosophers and encyclopaedists. Their chief aim was to popularise philosophy and science among the Muslims of their age and thus to rescue them from the impending gloom of the decline and stagnation of speculation and research. They flourished at

Basra in the later half of the tenth century during the Buwayhid Interlude, at the time when the Mutazila had its second and last revival and inflence. They sought to keep burning the lamp of knowledge. They were possibly Shi'ites, probably Ismailites, but certainly Mutazilites. Membership of their "Society" was based on strict conditions: only men of unsophisticated character and of purest morals were admitted. Branches of the Society existed in many cities of the Muslim East, with its headquarters at Basra. The members of the Society wrote tracts or *Rasail* on various topics in science, philosophy and religion. But they published them anonymously, for they wanted to conceal their names. These Rasail or tracts were sent to the booksallers or given to the public. Yet the names of five or six of these Brethren are known. Abu Sulaiman Muhammad bin Nasr al-Busti, Abu'l Hasan Ali bin Harun Zanjani, Abu Ahmad an-Nahrajuri, al-Awfi and Zayd bin Rifa. The last named was the moving soul of the Society. As their names show, they were Arabs and Persians. In all they probably wrote and published fifty-one Rasail or tracts in a popular style. These tracts dealt with almost every subject, *viz.*, mathematics, astronomy, physical geography, music, biology, zoology meteorology, machines, grammar, ethics, metaphysics, the doctrine of future life, etc. "They constituted, in fact, a popular encyclopaedia of all the sciences and philosophy then extant" (Ameer Ali). In short, they gave the world a resume of the knowledge as it existed at the end of the 11th century. Their meetings, held on Fridays, were attended by men of different creeds and beliefs. Their writings influenced many later writers and thinkers. Their method was essentially synthetical and encyclopaedic. They aimed at providing answers to all questions of religion, philosophy and culture.

History and Biography. The writing of history had always been a favourite study with the Muslims. It was so partly for its own value and partly for its aid in understanding the Holy Quran. As Nicholson writes, "For their right understanding of the Holy Quran, a knowledge of Arabic Grammar and philosophy was essential and this involved the study of ancient pre-Islamic poems. The study of these poems entailed researches into geneology and history, which in course of time became independent branches of learning."

The writing of history and biography began at the end of the Umayyad period. But, as usual, it came into its own under the Abbasides. During the Umayyad period, it was mainly oral tradition ragarding the events and personalities of early Islam, its conquests and other events. But with the advent of the Abbasides, recorded history began. **Hisham al-Kalbi** of Kufa who

died in 819, was the first historian, who wrote a history of the Jahiliya or pre-Islamc period. **Mohammad bin Ishaq** of Medina who died in 767, wrote the first biography of the Holy Prophet, entitled "*Sirat Rasul Allah*", which was later re-edited by **Ibn Hisham**, who died in 834 at Cairo. **Musa bin Uqbah** (died 758) and **al-Waqidi** (died 823) wrote the history of the Conquests, called "*Maghazi*". **Ibn Sad**, who was a secretary of Waqidi, wrote the biographies of the Prophet, his Companions and their Successors or Tabi'een. The Egyptian **Ibn Abdal Hakam** (died 871) wrote *Futuh Misr* (Conquest of Egypt) and the Persian **Ahmad bin Yahya al-Baladhuri** (died 892) wrotely *Futuh al-Buldan* (Conquest of Countries) and *Ansab al-Ashraf* (Ceneology of the Nobles).

More formal historiography began with **Ibn al-Muqaffa** (died 757), who wrote "*Siyar Muluk al Ajam*" **Ibn Qutaybah**, a Persian, who died at Baghdad in 889, wrote *Kitab al-Ma'arif* (Book of Knowledge) a manual of history and his contemporary, **Ahmad bin Daud al-Dinawari** (died 895) wrote *Al-Akhbar al-Tiwal* (Long Histories). At the same time the famous geographer and historian **Ibn Wazih al-Yaqubi** wrote a universal history. His example was followed by several great historians of Islam. **Miskawayh** (died 1030) wrote a universal history. But the greatest names among Muslim historians were Tabari, Masudi, Ibn al-Athir and of course, the greatest of them all, **Ibn Khaldun**, who, however, belonged to the post-Abbaside period.

Tabari. Abu-Jafar Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (838—923) the "Livy of the Arabs", was born in Tabaristan, the mountainous region of Persia around the Caspian Sea, from which place his designation is derived. But he came to Baghdad, where he died in 923. His fame rests on two great achievements, *viz*., his Commentaries on the Quran and his elaborate and accurate history, entitled "*Tarikh al-Rasul wa'l Muluk*' (History of the Prophets and Kings). It was a universal history, a model of several other similar attempts by latter Muslim historians. It began with the creation of the world and came down to the year 302 A.H./915 A.D. It was composed in the usual Arab method of the chronological description of events year by year. But Tabari made great efforts in collecting and verifying the events he described. He made long journeys to various places and persons in order to collect accurate information about the events he detailed in his book. His journeys in quest of knowledge took him to Persia. Iraq, Syria and Egypt. His book is in several volumes. They were, however, an abridgment of a plan of a history ten times larger than the published one.

Masudi. Abu'l Hasan Ali al-Masudi, called the "Herodotus of the Arabs", was born at Baghdad at the end of the 9th century.

He was an Arab of the Northern stock and was a Mutazilite. From his early youth, he travelled in quest of learning in all countries of the Muslim world and even went beyond into India, the Deccan, Ceylon, East Africa (Zanzibar) and as far as China. In the last decade of his eventful life, he settled in Syria and Egypt and died at Fustat in 956. At this time he wrote his books, among which the most famous are "*Muruj al-Dhahab wa Ma'din al-Jawhar*" (Pastures of Gold and Mines of Jewels) in 30 volumes, which is, indeed, an encyclopaedia of historical and geographical knowledge he had accumulated during his eventful travels ; "*Kitab ut-Tanbih*", which contains his philosophy of history and nature, and "*Mirat uz-Zaman*" (Mirror of the Time), an other voluminous works. Masudi followed a different method of writing history than Tabari. "Instead of grouping his events around years, he grouped them around dynasties, kings and peoples, a treatment followed by Ibn Khaldun and minor historians." (Hitti).

Ibn al-Athir. The last great historian of the Abbaside period was Izz-ud-Din Ibn al-Athir (1160—1234). He was a native of Jazira Bani-Umar, near Mosul, in Upper Iraq. He wrote two books ; the first entitled "*Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*" (The Complete Book of history) was a continuation of Tabari's History. But he added a history of the Crusades, because he brought it upto 1231 A.D. (Tabari's History ended with the year 915 A.D.) His second important work was entitled *Usd al-Ghabah*" (Lions of the Thicket), was a collection of 7,500 biographies of the Companions of the Holy Prophet. His contemporory, **Ibn al-Jawzi** (1186—1257) wrote another universal history, entitled "*Mirat al-Zaman fi Tarikh al-Ayyam*" which brought history upto to the year 1256. With Ibn al-Athir began the decline of historiography among the Arabs, with the solitary exception of Ibn Khaldun.

Special histories. Besides these formal histories, a number of authors wrote special histories, dealing with various subjects. **Abu'l Faraj** of Isfahan, but of Arab descent, wrote a history of music and Arab poetry, entitled *Kitab al Aghani*, a voluminous work in 21 volumes. **An-Nadim**, (died 995) also called **al-Warraq** (paper-dealer) perhaps for the reason that he was either a book-seller or a librarian, compiled his famous bibliography, entitled "*al Fihrist*", a veritable book of books, which gives a detailed information on all books and their authors upto his times. It was a literary history of the Arabs upto the end of the 10th century. **Ibn Khallikan**, a Persian, was an author of a biographical dictionary, but he belonged to the post-Abbaside period, as were also **Abu'l Fida**, **al-Zahabi**, and others.

A REVIEW

Spirit of the Muslim science and philosophy. We have surveyed

briefly the great achievements of the Muslims during the Abbaside period. Sarton, a modern historian of science, writes enthusiastically. "The main task of mankind was accomplished by Muslims. The greatest philosopher, al-Farabi, was a Muslim ; the greatest mathematicians, Abu Kamil and Irahim ibn Sinan, were Muslims; the greatest geographers and encyclopaedist, al-Masudi, was a Muslim; the greatest historian, al-Tabari, was still a Muslim." Briffault, a scientist, describes the method and nature of the Muslim science of the Middle Ages, in these words : "Science owes a great deal to Arab culture. The ancient world as we saw, was pre-scientific. The astonomy and mathematics of the Greeks were a foreign importation never thoroughly acclimatised in culture. The Greeks systematised, generalised and theorised, but the patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and prolonged observation and experimental enquiry were altogether alien to the Greek temperament. What we call science arose in Europe as a result of new methods of investigation, of methods of experiment, observation and measurement, of the development of mathematics in form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs."

But, unhappily, the Arab or the Muslim history of achievements in science, philosophy and learning came to a close with the fall of the Abbdside Caliphate. With very few exceptions, the later history of the Muslims in science, philosophy and culture was, if at all, a mere repetition of the Abbaside achievements. "After the Mongol invasions," writes Von Kremer, "the Muhammadan world lost for ever its ideal and even its cultural unity." What were the reasons and factors responsible for this tragic decline and end of the Muslim science, philosophy and learning after the Abbasides.

Causes of the decline of Muslim Science and Larning: Causes were numerous and complex. First of all the reason was the reverence or regard for the authority of tradition, both religious and scientific, which stunted the growth of new thought and movement among the later Muslims. down to the present day. They came to believe that all knowledge, all science, all philosophy and all learning were perfected by an Aristotle, a Farabi, an Ibn Sina, a Ghazali, or some other great thinker or writer of the past, and that now they need only repeat studiously and faithfully what the ancients had thought and written. The second reason was the dampening influence of the resurgent orthodoxy of the Mutakallameen or the scholastic theologian, who, after winning their battles against the Mutazilites and other rationalists perfected a system of theology which resisted further investigation and enquiry by free reason. As Islamic philosophy and learning were primarily an

attempt to harmonise religion with reason, the perfected theology of the Mutakallameen was accepted as the last word in philosophy and science. No more quest for Truth was felt necessary. Other reasons were the growing political anarchy, the Mongol despradations, and destruction of the centres of learning and culture, the burning of the libraries and of books by the Mongols and other foes of the Abbasides, the social chaos, the ever-diminishing social frequency of the intellectual classes, the decline of wealth and prosperity, over-emphasis on memory-work, and, a complacent, indolent and sophisticated attitude towards the problems of life and Nature. They came to believe that they knew everything and need not further enquire or learn anything new.